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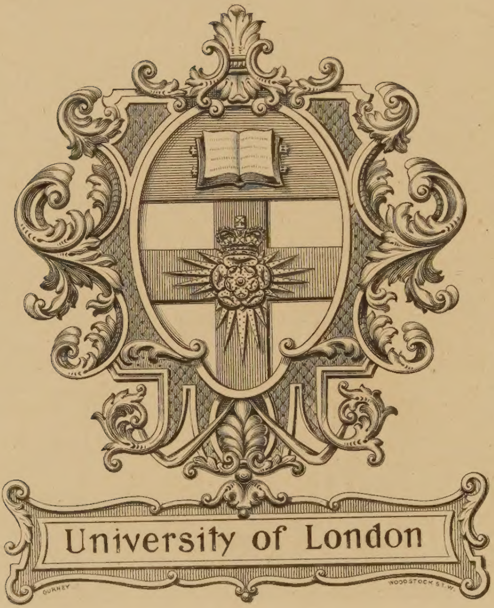
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HANSARD'S

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

THIRD SERIES:

COMMENCING WITH THE ACCESSION OF

WILLIAM IV.

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54 VICTORIÆ, 1890-91.

VOL. CCCLI.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

THE THIRD DAY OF MARCH, 1891,

TO

THE SIXTH DAY OF APRIL, 1891.

Third Volume of the Session.

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HISTORY.

CONQUEST to 34 GEO. II. 1066 to 1760.

Vol. 1 to 15, 1 Will. I. to 34 Geo. II. 1066-1760

REIGN OF GEORGE III. 1760 to 1820.

Vol. 15 to 35, 1 Geo. III. to 40 Geo. III. 1760-1800.

(First Parliament.)
— 35....41 Geo. III... 1801
— 36....42 — .. 1802

(Second Parliament.)
— 36....43 Geo. III... 1802/3

DEBATES.

First Series.

(Second Parliament—*continued.*)
Vol. 1 to 2..44 Geo. III. 1803/4
— 3 „ 5..45 — 1805
— 6 „ 7..46 — 1806

(Third Parliament.)
— 8 to 9..47 — 1806/7

(Fourth Parliament.)
— 9 to 11..48 — 1807/8
— 12 „ 14..49 — 1809
— 15 „ 17..50 — 1810
— 18 „ 20..51 — 1810/11
— 21 „ 23..52 — 1812

(Fifth Parliament.)
— 24 to 26..53 — 1812/13
— 27 „ 28..54 — 1813/14
— 29 „ 31..55 — 1814/15
— 32 „ 34..56 — 1816
— 35 „ 36..57 — 1817
— 37 „ 38..58 — 1818

(Sixth Parliament.)
— 39 to 40..59 — 1819
— 41 — ..60 — 1819/20

Second Series.

REIGN OF GEORGE IV. 1820 to 1830.

(Seventh Parliament.)
Vol. 1 to 3..1 Geo. IV. 1820
— 4 „ 5..2 — 1821
— 6 „ 7..3 — 1822
— 8 „ 9..4 — 1823
— 10 „ 11..5 — 1824
— 12 „ 13..6 — 1825/6
— 14 „ 15..7 — 1826

(Eighth Parliament.)
Vol. 16 —.. 7 Geo. IV. 1826
— 17 —.. 8 — 1827
— 18 to 19.. 9 — 1828
— 20 „ 21..10 — 1829
— 22 „ 25..11 — 1830

Third Series.

REIGN OF WILLIAM IV. 1830 to 1837.

(Ninth Parliament.)
Vol. 1 to 3..1 Will. IV 1830/1

(Tenth Parliament.)
— 4 to 8..2 — 1831
— 9 „ 14..3 — 1832

(Eleventh Parliament.)
— 15 to 20..4 — 1833
— 21 „ 25..5 — 1834

(Twelfth Parliament.)
— 26 to 30..6 — 1835
— 31 „ 35..7 — 1836
— 36 „ 38..8 — 1837

REIGN OF VICTORIA 1837 to

(Thirteenth Parliament.)
Vol. 39 to 44..1 Victoria 1838
— 45 „ 50..2 — 1839
— 51 „ 55..3 — 1840
— 56 „ 58..4 — (a) 1841

(Fourteenth Parliament.)
— 59 — .. 4 — (b) 1841
— 60 to 65.. 5 — 1842
— 66 „ 71.. 6 — 1843
— 72 „ 76.. 7 — 1844
— 77 „ 82.. 8 — 1845
— 83 „ 88.. 9 — 1846
— 89 „ 94..10 — (a) 1847

(Fifteenth Parliament.)
— 95 — ..10 — (b) 1847
— 96 to 101..11 — 1848
— 102 „ 107..12 — 1849
— 108 „ 113..13 — 1850
— 114 „ 118..14 — 1851
— 119 „ 122..15 — (a) 1852

(Sixteenth Parliament.)
Vol. 123 — ..15 Vict. (b) 1852
— 124 to 129..16 — 1853
— 130 „ 135..17 — 1854
— 136 „ 139..18 — 1855
— 140 „ 143..19 — 1856
— 144 — ..20 — (a) 1857

(Seventeenth Parliament)
— 145 to 147..20 — (b) 1857
— 148 „ 151..21 — 1858
— 152 „ 153..22 — (a) 1859

(Eighteenth Parliament.)
— 154 to 155..22 — (b) 1859
— 156 „ 160..23 — 1860
— 161 „ 164..24 — 1861
— 165 „ 168..25 — 1862
— 169 „ 172..26 — 1863
— 173 „ 176..27 — 1864
— 177 „ 180..28 — 1865

(Nineteenth Parliament.)
— 181 to 184..29 — 1866
— 185 „ 189..30 — 1867
— 190 „ 193..31 — 1867/8

(Twentieth Parliament.)
— 194 to 198..32 — 1868/9
— 199 „ 203..33 — 1870
— 204 „ 208..34 — 1871
— 209 „ 213..35 — 1872
— 214 „ 217..36 — 1873

(Twenty-first Parliament.)
— 218 to 221..37 — 1874
— 222 „ 226..38 — 1875
— 227 „ 231..39 — 1876
— 232 „ 236..40 — 1877
— 237 „ 242..41 — 1878
— 243 „ 249..42 — 1878/9
— 250 251..43 — (a) 1880

(Twenty-second Parliament.)
— 252 to 256 .43 — (b) 1880
— 257 „ 265..44 — 1881
— 266 „ 273..45 — (a) 1882
— 274 „ 275..45 — (b) 1882
— 276 „ 283..46 — 1883
— 284 „ 292..47 — 1884
— 293 „ 301..48 — 1884/5

(Twenty-third Parliament.)
— 302 to 307..49 —(a) 1886

(Twenty-fourth Parliament.)
— 308 & 309..49 —(b) 1886
— 310 to 321..50 — 1887
— 322 to 332..51 — 1888
— 333 to 340..52 — 1889
— 341 to 348..53 — 1890

ERRATA.

March 12. Mr. THEODORE FRY, page 801, after line 15 insert the word "not."

March 23. *Insert* following Question and Answer:—

IRELAND—CASE OF COUNTY INSPECTOR BURKE.

COLONEL WARING: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Board of Officers which sat upon Mr. Blake Burke's case reported that his injuries were received "in the actual performance of duty," and recommended that he should be granted an annual pension of £440; and that, on 9th February, 1887, the President of the Board of Trade, in forwarding the papers concerning the case to the Treasury, also made the same recommendation; and, if this be so, on what grounds was a smaller pension, *i.e.*, £400, granted; and why the Memorial of Mr. Blake Burke, which has recently been sent by the Home Office to the Irish Office, has not been forwarded to the Treasury?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): In reply to my hon. and gallant Friend, I have to say that it is a fact that the Board made this recommendation referred to, and that the Irish Government forwarded it to the Treasury. The Treasury, however, in the exercise of the discretion vested in them by statute, awarded the smaller pension named. The Memorial referred to in the second paragraph was not forwarded to the Treasury, as the Irish Government had been already informed by them that the decision already come to in the case was final.

HANSARD'S
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

IN THE

Sixth Session of the *Twenty-Fourth Parliament* of the
United Kingdom of *Great Britain* and *Ireland*,
appointed to meet 5 August, 1886, in the Fiftieth
Year of the Reign of

HER MAJESTY QUEEN VICTORIA.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1890-91.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 3rd March, 1891.

EAST INDIA OFFICERS BILL [H.L.] (No. 35).

Reported from the Standing Committee, with Amendments. The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 49.)

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (BLIND AND DEAF) BILL [H.L.].—(No. 43).

Reported from the Standing Committee, with further Amendments. The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the Whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received on Friday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 50.)

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE QUALIFICATION AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.].—(No. 39)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*The Duke of St. ALBANS: My Lords, the object of this Bill is to remove the property qualifications of persons serving as Justices of the Peace in counties. In my endeavour to induce your Lordships to agree with me that those qualifications are inconvenient, I wish to repudiate any desire or intention to reflect in any way upon the manner in which County Magistrates at present discharge their duties. I have in the first place to remind your Lordships that the appointment of County Magistrates rests with the Lord Chancellor; but the habit has grown up that he shall avail himself of the local knowlege possessed by the *custos rotulorum* of the counties, and custom from time immemorial has brought it about that the Lord Lieutenants nominate gentlemen for office, as Justices of the Peace, by presenting a list of names to the Lord Chancellor.

An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

The Bill is short, and will not, I trust, by its brevity outrage the etiquette of legal drafting. It does not apply to Scotland or Ireland. It seeks to repeal those Acts which were founded upon the old Statute of Henry VII., which imposed territorial qualifications for persons serving as County Magistrates. The qualifications under the Act of George II. (which they have to state on oath) are £100 a year, free of all incumbrances, derived from land. Although they have to assert on oath that they possess that qualification they can dispose of it the next day after they have taken that oath required of them, and still remain Magistrates. To this qualification no condition of residence attaches, nor any necessity for attendance. The other qualification is a reversionary interest of £300 a year in land, and by the Statute of Victoria a two years' residence in a house upon which the rates have been paid during that period by the occupier of a value as rated for the Inhabited House Duty of £100 a year. As regards this condition, if the Magistrate ceases to be so resident he ceases to be qualified in that respect. Now those qualifications identify County Magistrates with the landed interest. I believe the decisions of the County Benches are impartial and without bias; but I would appeal to the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack whether it is desirable that a judicial tribunal should be chosen necessarily—exclusively and solely selected—from those whose qualifications are leasehold or freehold qualifications in land, or houses, and that it should be in that way identified with a single interest. I mean the possession of capital, the employment of labour, a distinguished position in the Army, Navy, or Civil Service, even of a legal training, are no qualifications for a County Magistrate. The old Act of George II. says—

> "Whereas the constituting persons of mean estates to be Justices of the Peace may be highly prejudical to the public welfare."

Therefore anyone possessed of a million in Consols is legally, for the purposes of a County Magistrate, a person of mean estate. These qualifications belong really to a time when it was impossible even to go out shooting without a property qualification. I may be told that it is possible to amend these qualifications.

I prefer to follow the example set by Her Majesty's Government in the case of Chairman of County Councils who have been constituted *ex-officio* Magistrates of the county, and specially exempted from the necessity of possessing these qualifications. You do not require property qualifications in the case of Members of your Lordships' House; you do not require property qualifications in the case of your eldest sons or heirs-apparent to peerages who have really no legal status. In 1835 you abandoned property qualifications for Borough Magistrates, and I think I am quite correct—speaking in the presence of the Lord Chancellor of Ireland—in saying that for Resident or County Magistrates in Ireland there is no statutory qualification required. If you have confidence in the appointment of the Lord Chancellor, and if the Lord Chancellor has confidence in the recommendations of the Lords Lieutenant—and it is not the usual complaint that the recommendations of the Lords Lieutenant are too democratic—I trust you will be of opinion that "persons of mean estate" may in many cases be very properly appointed on their recommendation to the position of County Magistrates, without any danger to the community or to society. It is true that the selection may be made more difficult by the area being extended. I will trouble your Lordships with a statement of my own experience, having the honour to hold the position of Lord Lieutenant. The county with which I am connected is one of large estates and where great centres of population rise up, where there is no large body of wealthy residents, and where the houses are not of an expensive character. On my recommendation the Lord Chancellor appointed one gentleman who had held the position of Colonel of a Dragoon regiment, and another who filled a position of a County Alderman and of respect in a large town as County Auditor. Perhaps we are too conscientious in Nottinghamshire, because I fancy in some parts of the country they are apt to get round these by fagot qualifications; but in those two cases which I have mentioned I can only say tha tthe appointments were popular and satisfactory. Gentlemen who would have made excellent Magistrates have been unable to be appointed from not possessing the necessary property qualifications. On consulting many others who have the honour of holding the position of Lord Lieutenant, I find that their experience is the same—that these qualifications, and especially the rateable qualification of £100, excludes many good men. I have considered a proviso in the hope of meeting the objections as to non-residence and non-attendance, but grave and great difficulties were suggested to me. However, if the mind of man devise any proviso to deal with those questions, I shall be glad to give any suggestion my most earnest consideration in connection with this Bill. I trust your Lordships will consider it is not improper or unjustifiable for me to re-open this subject. Since it was last before your Lordships a great change has been made. There may have been some reason for these property qualifications when the county finances and the expenditure of the rates were vested in the Magistrates sitting at Quarter Sessions. At that time a territorial qualification for a Justice of the Peace may have been advisable. That reason however exists no longer, for by the changes which have been introduced in the law those duties and responsibilities are no longer vested in Quarter Sessions. I have only now to appeal to the indulgence of your Lordships' House. I have to the best of my ability brought this matter before you; but I understand that I shall be opposed by one who is a most eminent authority on every subject, and especially so, perhaps, on this which is now before the House. This proposal may by some be described as a Radical measure; but I can assure your Lordships that I move the Second Reading of the Bill with the true Conservative wish to strengthen the administration of justice by Magistrates in counties.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a."—(*The Duke of St. Albans.*)

*EARL COWPER: My Lords, I rise to second the Motion of my noble Friend that this Bill be read a second time. I have now been Lord Lieutenant of a county for a great number of years, longer probably than almost any Member of your Lordships' House—I hasten to add that I was appointed when I was very young. Now, I am very much surprised, I must confess, to hear that this Bill is to be opposed by so eminent a man as the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack. Sixteen years ago I supported a measure of very much the same kind introduced here by a noble Earl who has lately been taken from among us full of years and full of honours, Lord Albemarle. At that time, so unanimous was the feeling of your Lordships' House in favour of that measure, that the Second Reading of it was carried without a Division, though afterwards in Committee, when fewer Peers were present, it was so altered and changed and the marrow of it so completely taken out, that it resulted in nothing but the addition of the Inhabited House Duty Clause which included anybody, as my noble Friend has said, who possessed or occupied a house worth £100 a year in the place for which he was to be appointed to act as Magistrate. That clause has been of very little use, and has been almost inoperative. It has done very little to mitigate the evil. I supported Lord Albemarle's measure on the ground that I have found it very difficult in parts of my own county, Bedfordshire, to keep the different Benches up to their proper standard. I may add that since that time this difficulty has not diminished, and I am sure that some of those noble Lords, who are Lord Lieutenants of counties which are not very populous, have found the same difficulty as we shall probably hear by and by. I mention the great change which was made in the former measure in Committee partly as a warning to my noble Friend. Even if he is successful in carrying the Second Reading he must not forget to take care at the proper time that something like it does not happen again. Of course, I cannot anticipate the objections which will be brought forward to-night. I can only recall the objections which have been made on former occasions. The first objection which has already been alluded to by my noble Friend is that a man who is partly charged with the administration of the finances of the county should himself be interested in keeping down the rates. I do not think that was ever a very good argument because the land qualification was not required to be local, it might be possessed in any part of England, and I do not suppose that a man who is appointed to act as a Magistrate in Kent, and who acts there merely because he happens to have property to the value of £100 a year in Northumberland, or in Cornwall, would be a bit more anxious to keep down the rates in Kent. But whatever weight that argument may have possessed at one time it has not the same force now, because the management of the county finances has been taken out of the Magistrates' hands since the County Councils have been established. Then the other point made was that the man who acts as Justice of the Peace should have a good social position. This may have had a good effect in the time of George II., but I do not think the ownership of land carries the same *prestige* in the present day as it did 150 years ago. There are many men of the highest social position who do not possess a single acre of land; and I think the experience of most of your Lordships will show you that a merely nominal £100 or £1,000 a year from land represent really much less than those incomes derived from any other source. But I will go further than that. I hope I shall not endanger my noble Friend's measure by being thought too Radical or too advanced in my views when I say I think the time has come when we may appoint as Justices of the Peace people of a rather lower social grade. My opinion in this respect is very much influenced by what I have seen as to the working of the County Councils. We see now on the County Councils men of a lower social position, tenant farmers, small professional men in our little county towns, and sometimes even tradesmen, acting and taking a leading part both in those assemblies themselves and in Committees—doing a great deal of work and inspiring confidence in all those whom they meet. If those men are able to make their way to the front in the County Councils, I think it will be very difficult to say they should be kept off the Bench. Then it has been said that these old Acts which it is proposed to repeal, strengthen the hands of the Lords Lieutenants and enable them to resist demands for putting improper persons on the Bench. Now I think that statement is rather a slur on the Lords Lieutenants in this country. I think they ought to be able to say "No" when necessary, without sheltering themselves behind Acts of Parliament; and, what is more, if they cannot say "No" without sheltering themselves behind Acts of Parliament, they will still be in actual danger of crowding the Bench with unfit and incompetent persons. Besides, I go as far as to say that in some points of view it may strengthen the hands of Lords Lieutenants (though it may sound a paradox to say it) to remove the shelter. At the present moment the men so qualified are comparatively so few that it is rather a slight to refuse to appoint one of those gentlemen if he has the qualification; but supposing there should be three times or five times as many men qualified and thoroughly fit for the post of Magistrate, then there is room for selection; for it would no longer be a slight to refuse a man. I think, particularly in populous counties, it may help the Lords Lieutenants to refuse a man without hurting his feelings; whereas in counties like mine, not so populous, it would enable the Bench to be very much strengthened. One or two arguments have been used upon this question which I will not enlarge upon. There has been a suggestion made that the present state of things leads to a certain amount of evasion of the law, artificial qualifications are made up to enable people to act. I do not think that is so often done or to such an extent that it is of very much consequence, still I do not think it is a good thing to encourage an evasion of the law, even though the law that is evaded may not be a very good one. Then there is another argument raised:—that the present system very often forces Lords Lieutenants to appoint clergymen upon the Bench. Now, I am quite willing to admit that clergymen have sometimes made very good Magistrates. I am quite willing to admit that *primâ facie* perhaps a clergyman is, at least, as fit, and possibly more fit, for this office than a mere landowner, or anybody else, because he is, to a certain extent, a picked man, and he is pretty sure to have received a fair education. But it is chiefly for the sake of the clergy themselves that I must confess I dislike having them upon the Bench, because I think it interferes with the exercise of their spiritual functions, and with that position in the parish which a clergyman ought to hold, in order to perform those spiritual functions properly. However, I will not go into this point or the other one I have mentioned, because my chief reasons for supporting my noble Friend are that in the first place, as I have said, in my county, and I believe in many others, while the Bench is practically in need of being reinforced, there is a difficulty in finding men to fill the vacancies upon them; and there are many men who are perfectly willing to come forward and act as Magistrates whom we might appoint. I could myself send in two or three names to the Lord Chancellor (who, as I understand, will oppose this Bill), and I am sure he would not refuse to appoint them, if, unfortunately, that qualification did not stand in the way. Another thing is that since the County Councils have been appointed it seems an anomaly to keep men who have obtained a leading position in them off the Bench. Really I think the only argument that can be advanced in this matter is that of safeguard afforded to the Lord Lieutenants, that the existing property qualifications enable them to refuse unfit men, and I have given an answer to that. I shall expect to hear better reasons than I have heard yet against this proposal. Up to the present time I must say I have never heard any good arguments brought forward against this change in the law. For these reasons I beg to support the Motion of my noble Friend for a Second Reading of this Bill.

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: My Lords, no one who has heard the Debate to-night, as far as it has proceeded, can question that the matter has been presented to your Lordships' notice with the most persuasive moderation; still I cannot but think that the speeches which have been addressed to the House would have been more applicable to a Bill constructed on entirely different lines to those which are contained in the three small clauses of the noble Duke's Bill. The question of the qualification for an unpaid magistracy is an important one, and this Bill only deals with a portion of the subject. The Bill purports to be for the amendment of the qualifications of County Magistrates.

*THE DUKE OF ST. ALBANS: To abolish them.

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: "Jurisdiction of the Peace Qualification Amendment" is its title, and that is what is spoken of in the body of the Bill.

*THE DUKE OF ST. ALBANS: It is an Act "to abolish."

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: Yes, that is the substance of it. But the speeches of the noble Duke and of the noble Earl were speeches in favour of the amendment of the qualification, though the substance of the Bill is for the abolition of all qualification. Now that is obviously a very serious matter. It is no doubt unintentionally disguised by the word "Amendment" appearing in the title, and the speeches which have been addressed to your Lordships so moderately are speeches suggesting that in some details, in some particulars, and in some counties it might be desirable to make an amendment in the law. But that is quite a different thing from the substance of the Bill now before us, which proposes to abolish all qualifications whatever. The question of the qualifications of an unpaid magistracy in a country like this is wide and far-reaching. What is the necessity or reason for going into it now? Does not the present system work well? Is there any outcry; or any deficient supply of gentlemen fully qualified? It is obvious that many things have to be considered, that one has to consider what it would lead to, and how far that is directly dealt with in the measure submitted for consideration. It is plain that if this Bill passed into law Lords Lieutenants of Counties would have their task very largely increased; there would be left little or no clue to guide them as to how they should use their power of recommendation, and certainly the Lord Chancellor would have little assistance when he came to exercise his power of making appointments on that recommendation. Now, would it be wise or reasonable to abolish at once all the qualifications required for the Magistracy? I am not at all in favour of limiting the Magistracy to large landowners, rich men, or men of high social position; I am quite in favour of every latitude of choice being exercised from those of moderate means, and not of high social position, if they are otherwise qualified in the opinion of the Lord Chancellor to sit on the Bench and take part in the administration of justice. But this is not a Bill which proposes another qualification. It does not say that £100 a year rating qualification is too high, and that another figure not so high should be accepted in its place. It is not a Bill which proposes that if a man's chances not to have land, but possesses a moderate sum of money, that moderate sum of money should be accepted as a sufficient substitute. Nor is it a Bill which proposes, as in the case of Chairmen of County Councils, to treat certain people in certain official positions as being qualified for the Magistracy: it does nothing of the kind. It is not even a Bill which proposes to substitute a residential test for the property qualifications now demanded, but it is a measure which proposes at once to abolish all qualifications whatever for the Magistracy. It might, therefore, be read thus: That it is desirable for the Lord Chancellor, in the exercise of his discretion following the recommendations of Lords Lieutenants of Counties, to appoint men who are unqualified and without any safeguard whatever in the way of the possession of property. I venture to think there are very few of your Lordships who would consider that would be a wise declaration to make, and not a safe method in which any Lord Chancellor would be justified in exercising this high power of making appointments to the Bench. The state of matters in Ireland in this respect has been referred to; and, therefore, I should like to explain exactly how the case stands there. It is true there is no Statute requiring a property qualification at the present time; but as every noble Lord who has held the office of Lord Lieutenant in Ireland at any time for a great number of years knows very well, as a matter of practice Lords Lieutenants of Counties ascertain with precision, and submit for the consideration of the Lord Chancellor, what are the qualifications by way of property—it may be in land or it may be in money—particulars as to residence, and otherwise, with regard to the positions of the persons who are submitted for appointment by the Lord Chancellor. And thus it is that as a matter of practice—perfectly settled practice—the prudence of which I am sure will commend itself to all your Lordships, no gentleman would be appointed unless there were circumstances connected with him indicating that he is in a pecuniary position with regard to solvency and means, as well as of residence, which would enable him to exercise the functions of an unpaid Magistrate, without burden, and in a way to command the confidence of those among whom he lived. It is obvious from that, that the further practice, which rests on Statute, should follow, that if a man gets into pecuniary difficulties, becomes bankrupt, or settles with his creditors, he ceases to have the right to exercise magisterial functions. As I have said, this is not a case of an Amendment which has been presented to your Lordships proposing to substitute one qualification for another, to widen the discretion of the Lord Chancellor so as to enable him to say that although a gentleman whose name is submitted to him has not £100 a year from land, still, having regard to the circumstances, he thinks it is a case which justifies him in making the appointment desired. It is not a case of suggesting even that Amendment or any Amendment whatever, but it is a Bill which proposes to enact that it is desirable to abolish all the qualifications which exist at present, which would be interpreted as meaning that it is desirable to appoint men without means and without such qualification as will be a reasonable safeguard that they will enjoy the confidence of those among whom they live, and in whose affairs they will have the administration of justice.

Lord DENMAN: My Lords, I venture to think this measure is entirely unnecessary. I happened to have seen in a newspaper a statement that a working man had been appointed as a Magistrate for Leicester. In passing through Leicester yesterday I inquired as to the *status* of that man, and I was told there was not the least doubt as to his solvency, and that he was secretary to a Trades Union of Shoemakers. Until the position of the magistracy is proved to have been injured by having a property qualification, I think it is perfectly unnecessary to do away with the property qualification. It will always be assumed that Magistrates have sufficient property for their position; it is to nobody's interest to inquire into their circumstances, and as long as they conduct themselves in a proper manner I think they ought to remain as they are, and that we ought not to overload the Statute Book with such a measure as this. If no one else moves, I will do so, that this Bill be read a second time this day six months.

Amendment moved, to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Denman.*)

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I regret not to be able to concur in the proposition of the noble Duke who has moved the Second Reading of this Bill, or in the recommendations of its noble seconder. I hope, in the first place, to be able to convince the noble Duke of the inaccuracy of his recollection of the course of the Debate which took place on a former occasion on this subject. That Debate, I think, exhausted the matter. It is now fifteen years since it took place, and the noble Earl's recollection is, I must say, very imperfect, because instead of being passed by the general consent of your Lordships' House in the form in which it had been presented, it obtained a Second Reading—without a Division—because of what was said by the then Lord Chancellor, Lord Cairns. He had pointed out that the Bill as then introduced for the first time proposed a qualification of £300 a year in personalty, and that that was a qualification which might be entirely unconnected with the county, as the £300 a year might be obtained from bonds or what not. From the observations made by Lord Cairns in pointing out the necessity of some qualification which should entail connection with the county, it was suggested that there might be a qualification constituted by reason of an occupation as tenant in the county. That qualification was suggested to the noble Earl, and at that time the Second Reading was passed without a Division. Then when it came on in Committee, so far from the Bill being mangled in Committee in the direction which the noble Earl states, the qualification proposed by Lord Albemarle, who moved the Bill, was that there should be a rating qualification of £200 a year; to which Lord Cairns moved an Amendment that it should be reduced to £100 a year. So that the noble Earl will see, so far from Lord Albemarle's valuation being taken out of the Bill the amount was diminished by the action of Lord Cairns, who then occupied the Woolsack, and that was accepted by the House as a settlement.

*THE DUKE OF ST. ALBANS: In respect of an inhabited house?

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: Certainly, an inhabited house. That was Lord Albemarle's proposal, and, as I have said, what Lord Cairns did was to reduce the £200 to £100. Therefore the noble Earl will see that his recollection of that Debate, which I have looked up in *Hansard*, is exceedingly imperfect. Upon that main question I suppose this was the reason for enforcing a qualification of that kind; that it was not adopted from any idea of enforcing the dignity or importance of the County Benches, but it was done because it was thought that persons who were not to be paid for their work and who had to perform duties of some importance should be persons of some position and education at all events, and should be able to give their time in attending upon the County Benches for the administration of justice. It seems to me that is a very reasonable view. Now, my Lords, this question, having been fully debated 15 years ago and settled at that time, is proposed to be raised again by the noble Duke without, so far as I know, any cry for it, and without any desire for a change from any quarter. The noble Duke has said that other Lords Lieutenants have taken the same view as himself. I can only say that during the five years out of those 15 years which I have passed in my present office I have had no complaints from Lords Lieutenants of difficulty in finding qualified persons to fill the position and discharge the duties of County Magistrates. I have looked into the roll and I see that there are 11,000 Magistrates on the Bench in England and Wales. Roughly dividing that number among the various counties would give from 200 to 250 Magistrates for each county. Does the noble Lord suggest that there is any necessity for more than 250 Magistrates, taking that as an average for each county? If there had even been a case of that sort made, I confess I think it would be more satisfactory to your Lordships that we should have some evidence of facts in support of it. Then, is there any difficulty in getting Magistrates? I am not saying there may not sometimes be a difficulty in getting the Magistrates who have been appointed to attend on the Bench—that is another and an entirely different question, and if the noble Duke had suggested that after a certain number of non-attendances a Magistrate should cease to act, that might be a totally different thing; but to propose that there should be an abolition of all qualifications seems to me to be asking your Lordships to take a leap in the dark. The noble Lord has not told us how many Benches at Petty Sessions he has to supply; but I cannot help thinking that if there had been this difficulty experienced one would have heard of it. The limitation of the area of choice diminishes the difficulty of Lords Lieutenants in making recommendations, while the enlargement of the area of selection might make it more difficult to acquiesce, as I have always cheerfully done, in the nominations of the Lords Lieutenants. Given the limited area in which a Lord Lieutenant has now to make his selection, the Lord Chancellor may well assume that the Lord Lieutenant is acting on his own personal knowledge of the propriety of the recommendations he makes; but if you enlarge it and take in everybody throughout the county, I am not sure that the Lord Lieutenant would know more about the persons he recommended than the Lord Chancellor, though I quite admit that within the limited area which the Lord Lieutenant has now to select from he would be able to select desirable persons for the Magistracy. I cannot help thinking it is undesirable that, without any call on the part of the public, without any evidence of public inconvenience, and without any discussion being raised outside upon the subject, or the Lords Lieutenants themselves having debated the matter, a principle of selection which has for many centuries prevailed in this country should be suddenly changed when nobody has, so far as I know suggested that the Magistrates act otherwise than with complete justice, and with general satisfaction. Is it quite certain, I would venture to ask, that when you have changed that system you will have the same unanimous feeling which exists at present, that the Magistrates do their duty? The other topic which the noble Lord has referred to, namely, the appointment of clergymen to the Bench, was also argued on the former occasion. It was urged that they should be appointed, because it was stated that in some places the number of landed proprietors in the county possessing the necessary qualification was limited, and that, therefore, the clergy who lived in their parishes, and were, therefore, on the spot, should act, though not qualified in regard to possessing the same amount of land. It seems to me that the amendment made at the suggestion of Lord Cairns got rid of any difficulty of that kind. It was suggested that persons who had made large sums of money in commerce, or who were engaged as engineers or bankers, or what not, in counties ought not to be excluded. But they are all included now. Does the noble Duke, or does the noble Earl, suggest that in any county in England there are not enough persons occupying houses which are rated at £100 a year to fill the posts of Justices of the Peace? I should desire also, if that were the ground on which this proposition is put, that we should have some statistics placed before us in order that we may know the number of such inhabited houses in each county. I confess I should be surprised to learn that there is not a very large number, more than would justify leaving the matter as it is. It seems to me this is an effort really to abolish the property qualification, which has worked so well for so long a period, without any reason for it at all. The noble Earl as Lord Lieutenant of Bedfordshire appears to be in a somewhat singular difficulty. As I have said, I have not heard any complaints from other Lords Lieutenants, and until I hear that they are in difficulties in regard to the selection of suitable persons, I cannot assume that that is the case. In that case I should have expected that, as a proposition of this kind was to be made to the House, some of the Lords Lieutenants, with whom I am in constant communication, would have made some intimation of the fact; but without anything of the sort a Lord Lieutenant now comes forward with a statement which happens to be applicable, I suppose, to his own county, and without giving anybody notice of it, and affording an opportunity of inquiry into the facts. Sixteen years ago, when he made the speech which I had the pleasure of reading in *Hansard* this afternoon, he made a very strong case when he said there were many persons in the position of those I have mentioned who have, nevertheless, not got £100 a year from land; but that was answered by Lord Cairns, when he said—

> "We will introduce a rating qualification which is confined to the county, and not leave solely the land qualification,"

which, as the noble Lord has said, might qualify a person whose property was in Cornwall for acting as a Magistrate in Northumberland. The proposition was that it should be a qualification in the county where the jurisdiction was to be exercised, and that was unanimously accepted by this House. My great objection is to the disturbance of a system which seems hitherto to have worked very well, and to have procured for this country a body of unpaid Magistrates, such as, I believe, no other country in the world possesses, and I should be very sorry if such a system as that were interfered with except for adequate reasons.

LORD KENSINGTON: My Lords, I must first apologise to your Lordships and ask you to excuse me for venturing to rise after the speech of the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack; but it is only in reference to one sentence in that speech that I desire to make one or two remarks, bearing upon one point which has been referred to by the noble Lords who have spoken, that is with reference to the House Duty qualification. In fact, I think he rather made an appeal to any Member of your Lordships' House to stand up, if he could, and say there is any county in England or Wales in which there are not plenty of houses rated at £100 a year, and he said he would be surprised to hear from any noble Lord that that is the case. Well, I have not, of course, made an examination of the rate books throughout Pembrokeshire; but I am prepared to affirm that there are not a dozen houses in the entire County of Pembroke rated at £100 a year. I will give the noble and learned Lord an example. On the last occasion on which I sent a list of names up to him of gentlemen for appointment to the Commission of the Peace in Pembrokeshire, there was among them the name of only one gentleman residing in a town where I particularly wanted some Magistrates. I wrote to that gentleman asking him if he could furnish me with the name of another gentleman living outside the town. I obtained the name, but they both wrote back saying they had not the necessary qualification, and I am quite certain that in that town there would not be a single house which had the qualification rating. I may say that I consider the gentleman who resided outside the town would have made a very desirable Magistrate, though in some quarters there might have been exception taken on account of his strong political views; but that is an objection which I should not myself consider valid. Perhaps I may say that the gentleman is a strong Conservative; indeed, I do not think I am wrong in saying that he is Chairman of the Conservative Association of that town. I have in my pocket at this moment a bundle of seven letters in reference to appointments to the Magistracy; the last one is written by a gentleman who says he believes he is qualified, but that it would give him a great deal of trouble to prove it in Quarter Sessions; another gentleman writes that he thinks he is not qualified. So that I had the extra trouble of finding out other people to take the places of those I then asked. As I have said, I only rose in response to the remark made by the noble and learned Lord that he did not think there was any county which has not a sufficient number of houses rated at the required qualification to enable the Magistracy to be supplied, and that he believed there would be found on inquiry to be more than sufficient in every county. I can only say that I feel perfectly confident there is nothing of the kind.

*THE EARL OF CORK: As I should not wish your Lordships to think that every Lord Lieutenant sitting in this House is in favour of the measure introduced by the noble Duke behind me, I rise with great diffidence to tell your Lordships that my experience is entirely different to that of my noble Friend. For 27 years I have been Lord Lieutenant of the County of Somerset, and certainly I have never found the least difficulty in getting proper men to fill the Bench of Magistrates for that county; and I cannot help thinking that the grounds on which both my noble Friends are seeking now to so entirely change a system which has worked well over an enormous number of years are very weak indeed. The noble Lord behind me said he wished to appoint a distinguished cavalry officer and a gentleman who, I think, has made a fortune in trade.

*THE DUKE OF ST. ALBANS: And County Alderman.

*THE EARL OF CORK: Very well; but is it necessary to go outside the present qualification? I have looked at a little book which gives the names of the Magistrates in each county, and I find that in my noble Friend's county there are only seven Petty Sessional Divisions, and somewhere about 100 Magistrates to attend them. When I find that that is the case, I really cannot think there can be such very great difficulty in finding a sufficient number of Magistrates in the County of Nottingham. Then there is the County of Pembroke, of which my noble Friend Lord Kensington has spoken. I find that in that county there are only seven Petty Sessional Divisions, while to attend them there are no less than 115 Magistrates. Now those facts, I think, prove the necessity for what the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack suggested, namely, that we ought to have had something in the shape of statistics brought before us before we were asked to make this great change, but we have had no figures produced on which to go. I believe there is not the least necessity for this change. It is not one that is demanded by the people at large. Perhaps it may be thought that I am speaking as one of what may be called the old Tory Party upon this question; but I am not at all ashamed of being a Tory in defending a system which, as it at present exists, has worked well for so long a time, against a change such as that proposed, which I am not at all sure will work well, and which some Members of your Lordships' House who are well able to speak on the subject think will not do so. People like to feel that their affairs are adjudicated upon by those who are connected with the land, and who are of some position. Take one case, for example: farmers are being constantly brought up before the Magistrates for contravening local Acts in reference to the moving about of cattle, and I venture to think that the fact of the Bench being constituted of large owners gives those men confidence in the judgment of the Magistrates. I do not think they would at all like to have their cases settled by gentlemen having no qualification whatever, living perhaps in lodgings in a small town. If gentlemen in that position were to be appointed Magistrates I venture to think that confidence would be lost. I think I may venture to appeal to any noble Lord who is a Lord Lieutenant, and who at an agricultural dinner has been called upon to respond for the Magistrates of his county, whether the toast is not always well received. And that is so, because the people know that they can rely upon these men, who are men of position, whose decisions will not be warped by any prejudice whatever. I believe that this change, which is not called for, is a dangerous step. It would probably soon lead to the selection of the Magistrates by the County Councils; and once their appointment is left in the hands of the County Councils, I believe the day is not far distant when the ratepayers will themselves demand to have the appointment of the County Magistrates. Therefore, I feel compelled to vote against the Bill of my noble Friend, as he has given no reason whatever for changing a system which for a great number of years has worked well, and has given general satisfaction.

*EARL SPENCER: My Lords, as I am one of those who have the honour of being Lord Lieutenant of a county, I should like to say in a few words why I very heartily support the Bill which the noble Duke has introduced to your Lordships. I am sorry to find that I differ from my noble Friend who has just spoken in regard to this subject; but if I differ from him in one respect, I agree with him in another, which is this—that I hold very strongly to the opinion of the necessity for having Magistrates who will command respect in the county where they have jurisdiction. But my belief is that property qualifications have nothing whatever to do with that. I believe you can get men of independent spirit, of integrity, of impartiality—men who have leisure to attend to their duties, and who will have influence with their fellow-countrymen, without the necessity of having the present property qualification. No doubt, the fact of not having this property qualification will throw some little more responsibility on the Lords Lieutenants of Counties; and as the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack says, it may possibly throw greater responsibility on the Lord Chancellor; but I feel sure of this: that if Her Majesty's Lords Lieutenants in Counties are fit to exercise their duties, they will take care to recommend men just as good as the men who now fill the office, notwithstanding the passing of the Bill which the noble Duke proposes. I cannot at all agree with the noble and learned Lord in saying that the Lord Chancellor will probably in that case know as much of the men recommended to him by the Lord Lieutenant of a County as the Lord Lieutenant himself. The Lord Lieutenant must necessarily have a local knowledge of those whom he recommends, and he would be neglecting his duty most grossly if he recommended to the Lord Chancellor for the Commission of the Peace any gentleman with whom he was not acquainted, and for whom he could not vouch as being perfectly respectable, perfectly upright, and perfectly fitted for the post, which is an exceedingly responsible one. Now, I have had some little experience in regard to this matter, and though I do not pretend to say it has been so in many cases, certainly in my experience there have occurred some cases where I have been obliged to give up the idea of making appointments, because the gentlemen who were perfectly competent to fill the post had not the qualification required by the law. This Bill will enlarge the field of choice which a Lord Lieutenant has, and I maintain that it will be of enormous importance that he should be able to make a selection of Magistrates from more than one class of the community. It is not merely a question of being able to get a sufficient number of Magistrates. I maintain that it is of great importance to get on the Bench—so long as you get them of the description which I have attempted to describe—men of different classes of the community. You will strengthen the Bench by doing that, and you will inspire greater confidence among the public in the Magistrates who have this important jurisdiction. There is another point which I should like to urge before your Lordships: I believe there is no property qualification whatever required for Borough Magistrates. Why should Borough Magistrates be put in a different position to County Magistrates? Surely County Magistrates would be as well selected as the Borough Magistrates. The Borough Magistrates do their duty, I believe, with satisfaction to the public; and if the County Magistrates were selected without a property qualification they would equally do their duty and equally give satisfaction. The noble and learned Lord the Lord Chancellor of Ireland referred to the position as regards these matters in Ireland, and certainly as far as his speech went I thought his arguments were in favour of the proposal of the noble Duke. He said that in Ireland there was no property qualification necessary for the unpaid Magistracy, and yet there the very class we have been speaking of would be appointed.

*THE LORD CHANCELLOR OF IRELAND: No qualification by statute, but by practice.

*EARL SPENCER: Exactly; and that would be the very position in which the law would be in England if this Bill were passed. Therefore, I maintain, if my noble and learned Friend is right in regard to the men selected being always fit and proper men for the post, his argument may be claimed on our side to-night. I will not detain your Lordships at any greater length; but I thought it my duty, as one who has the honour to fill the post of Lord Lieutenant, to give my reasons why I very heartily support the proposal of the noble Duke.

On question, whether ("now") shall stand part of the Motion, their Lordships divided:—Contents 39; Not-Contents 62.

Bill to be read 2ª this day six months.

POLLEN FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 51.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS OF ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND REPEAL BILL. [H.L.]

A Bill for the repeal of the Local Government Acts for England and Scotland—Was presented by the Lord Denman; read 1ª and to be printed. (No. 52.)

COMMITTEE OF SELECTION FOR STANDING COMMITTEES.

Report from, That the Committee have added the Duke of Fife, the Earl of Harrowby, the Lord Reay, and the Lord Grimthorpe to the Standing Committee; and have added the Lord Harlech to the Standing Committee for the consideration of the Tithe Rent-Charge Bill. Read, and ordered to lie on the Table.

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 3rd March, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

THE HANSARD PUBLISHING UNION.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the business of the Hansard Publishing Union, Limited, has recently been taken over by a Receiver; if so, whether the Government contract is affected thereby; and whether care will be taken that no inconvenience or loss shall arise to the public service through these financial difficulties of the contractors?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Yes, Sir; I am aware that a Receiver has been appointed over this business. The Treasury have, however, received assurance that the business will be continued and the contracts fulfilled. The Receiver in his letter says—

> "Having been appointed Receiver for the debenture-holders of the above-named company, the property and control of the business has now vested in me. I therefore hasten to assure you that the steps now being taken for the re-construction of the company will in no way affect the carrying out of all contracts intrusted to them. I hereby undertake that the Government contracts will be carried out by me on the same terms and subject to the same conditions as they would have been by the company."

I am advised that this sufficiently protects the public interests, and I may add that there has been no inconvenience up to the present, the business going on as usual.

KEW GARDENS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether for several years there has been no official guide obtainable at Kew Gardens; if so, how this arises, and when will the want be supplied?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): The official guide to the Royal Gardens at Kew, which is at present out of print, is under revision. During the last two years the changes consequent on the re-arrangement of the Collection have been so extensive that it was thought better to suspend the publication of a guide which in such a period of transition would only mislead and be a cause of disappointment; but now that the re-arrangement of the Collection is drawing near its completion, the new guide has been put in hand, and I am informed by the Director (Dr. Dyer) that he hopes he may be able to get it out by next summer.

UNCLAIMED DIVIDENDS.

MR. ATKINSON (Boston): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will cause the Governor and Company of the Bank of England to resume the yearly publication of "the names and descriptions of the proprietors of unclaimed dividends in the public funds which became due before 31st December in each year, with the dates when the last dividends became payable, and the number of dividends due."

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): No, Sir; I am not prepared to cause the Bank to resume such yearly publications, for reasons which I think the hon. Member would appreciate if he should desire me to communicate them to him.

STATISTICS OF CATTLE SALES.

MR. MAHONY (Meath, N.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will take steps to collect and furnish, in the shape of a quarterly Return, statistics of sales of cattle by live weight in Great Britain and Ireland?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): The matter to which the question of the hon. Member refers is one more for the Board of Agriculture than for my own Department.

CRIMEAN VETERANS.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether there is any fund under the control of the War Department from which contributions might be made, in extremely necessitous cases, to sick and infirm veterans who served in the Crimean War, but who are not in the receipt of pensions?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): No, Sir; I regret to say there is no such fund. Our power of giving pensions is limited to those who have earned them by length of service, or who have suffered from wounds in action or climatic disease.

KING JA JA.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the temporary obstacles have been removed which prevented the immediate fulfilment of Her Majesty's Gracious promise to King Ja Ja, that he should be restored to his Native land; what is the present condition of Ja Ja's health; and whether the Government have adequate assurance that he can survive a much longer banishment from his Native climate?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The obstacles have not yet been removed. They arise from the necessity of preventing the introduction into the Protectorate of an element dangerous to its tranquillity while the administration is being organised. Ja Ja's state of health is not good, and no time will be lost in enabling him to return to Africa when circumstances permit.

MR. PICTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman give any undertaking as to the length of time which may have to elapse, or are we to regard the promise as having been withdrawn?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No, Sir; not at all. I said on a former occasion that the delay was owing to the necessity of establishing a better form of administration in the Oil Rivers district. There have been certain financial arrangements to be made, but I believe that they are now nearly settled, and I hope that it will not be long before everything is finally settled.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): Has there been any recent information as to the health of King Ja Ja? It was recently reported that he was in a very dangerous state of health.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I am afraid that he is not at all well, but I have no reason to apprehend that he is likely to die.

REGISTRATION OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTORS.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is in a position to state what was the total expenditure by the Local Authorities and by the Crown in connection with the registration of Parliamentary electors in each of the Parliamentary Divisions of the County of London during the year ending 31st December, 1890; and, if not, whether he will at an early date grant a full and detailed Return of such expenditure?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I am not in a position to state what was the total expenditure by the Local Authorities and by the Crown in connection with the registration of Parliamentary electors in each of the Parliamentary Divisions of the County of London during the year ended 31st December, 1890. I do not think that it would be practicable to ascertain the cost of the registration of Parliamentary electors as distinguished from County Council electors, or that the information suggested could be obtained for each separate Parliamentary Division of the County of London. I believe that the cost to the Crown of the Revising Barristers in London during the past year was £1,363.

*MR. CAUSTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman grant a Return of the total expense of Municipal and Parliamentary Registers for the whole of London?

*MR. RITCHIE: If the hon. Gentleman will put down his question upon the Paper I will answer it.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

MR. J. R. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether seven writers in the Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade have been promoted to the permanent staff, rising by annual increments of £5 to a maximum salary of £200; whether 20 writers in the Statistical Department of the Customs have been promoted to the permanent establishment, rising to a maximum salary of 10s. a day; whether 11 writers in the Seamen's Registry Office have been selected for promotion to the permanent establishment, rising to a maximum salary of £150; and whether the work upon which these men are engaged differs so materially in character from that performed by their class in other public Departments as to entitle them to preference for promotion; and, if not, whether a similar course is intended to be generally applied in all those cases where writers are employed upon duties higher than copying?

MR. JACKSON: The Treasury has authorised the appointments named by the hon. Member, subject to the approval of the Civil Service Commissioners. In reply to the fourth question, I have to say that the Treasury took this action because representations from the authorities of the three Departments satisfied them that there was, in each Department, work for a certain number of men which, while superior to that properly assignable under regulation to copyists, might suitably be performed by established officers of a class special to each Department and below the rank of the Second Division. The Treasury Minute laid before the House, of the 10th of August, 1889, paragraph 29, states the conditions on which such officers can be employed.

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS IN THE ADMIRALTY.

MR. J. R. KELLY: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he has received any recommendations from heads of Departments in the Admiralty for the exceptional promotion of Second Division Clerks to the upper grade of that division, as prescribed by the latter part of Clause 6 of the Order in Council of 21st March, 1890; and, what steps have been taken in regard to dealing with such recommendations?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): Certain recommendations have been made and are now under consideration.

PRISONERS AWAITING TRIAL.

SIR R. FOWLER (London): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what further progress has been made during the past year in the improvement of the accommodation for persons awaiting trial at Police and Assize Courts; and, what are the localities in which no special improvement has taken place in this respect?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): With regard to Sessions and Assize Courts in England, I am glad to inform my hon. Friend that as the result of correspondence during the last year there are 26 additional places in which the accommodation may now be regarded as satisfactory, bringing up the total number of such places to 145. There are 42 places in which improvement is desirable, and correspondence is still going on with hopes that a satisfactory result will shortly be arrived at. There are two cases in which the Local Authority have have failed to comply with requirements of the Secretary of State. I hope my hon. Friend will not ask me to name them publicly, as I trust the force of example may still influence them in the right direction. With regard to Police Courts I am not able to give complete explanations within the limits of an answer; but I can assure my hon. Friend that substantial progress is being made, especially in the Metropolis.

SIR R. FOWLER: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate what progress has recently been made in improving the accommodation for persons awaiting trial at Police and Assize Courts in Scotland?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): As my hon. Friend is possibly aware, a Report was made to the Secretary for Scotland by a Departmental Committee, appointed to inquire into this matter. Following upon this Report communications were addressed to the responsible authorities of those Court-houses specially named in the Report as requiring alterations. In certain cases the Secretary for Scotland has been informed that the necessary alterations have already been carried out.

ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER.

SIR R. FOWLER: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether, considering that three large pews were reserved for Members of this House at the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, he proposes to provide additional accommodation at St. Margaret's, Westminster?

*MR. PLUNKET: I have no power over the allocation of pews in St. Margaret's Church, any more than I had over those in the Chapel Royal at Whitehall. I am under the impression that provision is made for Members of Parliament at St. Margaret's, if they choose to attend.

THE INCOME TAX.

DR. MACDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he is aware that threatening printed notices were issued by collectors of Inland Revenue, in the month of January and early in February of this year, called "Special Applications," calling for immediate payment, stating that payment was due on the 1st of January, and that if not paid at once steps would be taken; whether this course is adopted under instructions from the Department, and whether legal; if he can state, for the information of the public, upon what date payment of Income Tax is compulsory; and if the collectors of Income Tax are bound to pay to the Treasury as soon as received all moneys collected, or whether they may, and do, keep it to their own credit for some time?

MR. GOSCHEN: I have reason to believe that there have been cases in which irregular notices have been issued by collectors of Inland Revenue, in addition to the usual regular series of notices issued under authority. Such notices have been issued by parochial collectors without instructions from the Board of Inland Revenue, and without its knowledge. The Board have already forbidden their use. As regards the hon. Member's third question, I have to state that payment of the Income Tax is due on or before the first of January in each year. Collectors are bound to pay in the money as soon as received.

MARRIAGES OF BRITISH SUBJECTS ABROAD.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what regulations have been made, or instructions given, for the carrying out of "The Marriage Act, 1890," by Her Majesty's Ambassadors and Consular or other officers; and what arrangements have been made for the registration, in pursuance of the Act of marriages of British subjects, whether solemnised under its provisions or in accordance with the local law of a Foreign country?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: A copy of the "Marriage Act, 1890," was sent to Her Majesty's Diplomatic and Consular officers on the 1st December last, and their attention was called to certain modifications which had been made thereby of the provisions of the "Consular Marriage Act, 1849." "The Marriage Act, 1890," authorised the issue by Her Majesty of an Order in Council to determine the conditions under which and the mode in which marriages solemnised in accordance with the local law of a Foreign country might be registered by a Consul abroad, but doubts have been raised as to how far Her Majesty would be justified in issuing an Order in Council with regard to marriage fees and other matters connected with *lex loci* marriages, and the point is still under consideration.

MR. WOODALL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what regulations, if any, have been made for the solemnisation of marriages on board Her Majesty's vessels under the provisions of "The Marriage Act, 1890?"

*LORD G. HAMILTON: No marriage has taken place on board Her Majesty's vessels since the Act was passed, and under the restrictions imposed by the Act it is doubtful if the solemnisation of marriages will hereafter occur on board ship. We have, therefore, issued no regulations on the subject.

MR. WOODALL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, what regulations have been made for the solemnisation of marriages between persons "of whom one at least is a British subject" before the Governor of Malta, and by Governors, High Commissioners, residents, and other officers, in other places within Her Majesty's dominions, under the powers conferred by "The Marriage Act, 1890?"

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): No regulations have been made, as it has not yet been found necessary to take that step.

SENIOR STORE OFFICER OF NAVAL GUNS.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty, whether it is the case that a Military Officer is appointed to be the "Senior Store Officer of Naval Guns;" and, if so, whether no Naval Officer could be found qualified to fill this post?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: Arrangements have been made for taking over with the Naval Ordnance Stores a portion of the officers of the Ordnance Store Department, and the Storekeeper General of Naval Ordnance Stores has been specially selected from that Department as being thoroughly conversant with the Naval Ordnance Store duties, and to avoid any break in the continuity of the Naval Ordnance Store administration. It was also an integral part of the transfer that a portion of the Ordnance Store officers should be taken over by the Admiralty in order that there should be no increase of cost by setting up a new Staff.

FULL PAY OF CAPTAINS AND COMMANDERS OF SHIPS.

ADMIRAL MAYNE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can explain on what principle Captains and Commanders of Ships are not entitled to full pay leave on returning from Foreign service, as everyone else in the ship is; and if he will re-consider this subject?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: The reason given in 1867 was that Captains and Commanders only obtain appointments at intervals, and cannot, therefore, be considered as being on continuous service, whereas the officers to whom the leave was granted were considered as being virtually on continuous service. I cannot hold out any hope of altering this decision.

ADMIRAL MAYNE: In consequence of the answer of the noble Lord, I beg to give notice that I shall call attention to the subject on the Estimates.

SELLING BEER TO INTOXICATED PERSONS.

MR. J. O'CONNOR (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the report of a case heard at the Gosport Petty Sessions on November 4th last, in which a charge against George Phillip Thornton, for selling beer to an intoxicated person on the 29th of October was dismissed, from which it appears that a police constable called Payne deposed to having watched two drunken soldiers enter the house: that he and another constable called Gill afterwards watched these drunken persons through a glass door being served with beer; and that the Bench, presided over by the hon. Member for South Sussex (Admiral Field), stated that the police had done their duty, and that Payne was justified in his action; and whether the police acted in accordance with their instructions and usual practice in this case?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have received a Report from the Magistrates, from which I gather that the facts are as stated, and that, in dismissing the charge, the Chairman observed generally that the police had only done their duty in seeking to bring home the offence to the landlord if they believed the soldiers to be drunk at the time. The Chief Constable informs me that the usual practice is for the police when they see a person whom they consider the worse for liquor enter a licensed house to enter them selves and caution the landlord.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: How does the right hon. Gentleman reconcile that statement with the instructions issued to the police, those instructions being rather to prevent the breaking of the law than to allow it to be broken?

Admiral FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): As I presided on the occasion to which the hon. Member alludes, if he will refer to me I will give him full information upon the point.

Mr. J. O'CONNOR: I think it is desirable that we should have further information, and therefore I will ask the hon. and gallant Admiral how he can reconcile——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

SCOTCH SCHOOL CHILDREN.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Scotch Education Department have any Returns showing the number of children in Scotland attending other than State-aided schools; if so, what was the date of the last Return; how many children were on the School Register and in average attendance at such schools in all Scotland; and what were the increases or decreases on such School Registers and in average attendance since any previous Return, and the date of such previous Return?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The statistics of the school supply, based upon Returns made by School Boards, were given in a Blue Book laid before Parliament in 1888. According to this the elementary schools, recognised by School Boards as efficient but not in receipt of State aid, contained accommodation for 29,770, and had an average attendance of 18,307. A similar Blue Book was issued in 1880, and according to it the accommodation in such schools was 50,031. The average attendance at that date was not given in the Returns; nor did either of the Returns state the number on the School Registers.

ADULTERATION OF ARTIFICIAL MANURES AND FEEDING STUFFS.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.) postponed until Thursday a question to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture when the Bill which he has in preparation for the prevention of adulteration of artificial manures and feeding stuffs will be introduced and put down for Second Reading; and whether, having regard to the fact that the principle of the Artificial Manures, &c. (Adulteration) Bill, now before the House, has been accepted in the Resolutions passed by all the Chambers of Agriculture which have up to this date considered that Bill, by the Chemical Manure Manufacturers' Association, by the Incorporated Oil Seed Association, and by other corporate bodies interested in this question, and has received the unanimous approval of the agricultural Press, he proposes to embody in his own Bill the principle thus approved?

THE BUXTON LIME COMPANY.

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether his attention has been called to the case of "Frances Bennett *v.* The Buxton Lime Company," in the County Court, New Mills, Derbyshire, reported in the *Sheffield Independent* of 14th February, in which the County Court Judge is reported to have held that the Company was justified in dismissing the plaintiff without notice, by reason of his having taken part in an agitation for higher wages, although the rules of the Company provided for a month's notice in writing; and whether it is the law that a workman forfeits his contract rights by taking part in strike or other agitations?

*The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. Webster, Isle of Wight): I have written to the learned County Court Judge, who informs me by telegram that the report in the paper referred to by the Hon. Member is inaccurate. Beyond that, I am unable to give an answer at present, and must ask the hon. Member to repeat the question on Thursday.

THE LABOUR COMMISSION.

Mr. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the reference to the Royal Commission on the relations between employers and employed will admit of an inquiry into the condition of the agricultural labouring class?

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will undertake that one Member of the Commission shall be a person who has special knowledge of subjects relating to agricultural labourers and in whom they shall have confidence?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I have already stated in general terms the view of the Government as to the matters which will form the material for inquiry by the Royal Commission, and it is not in my power at present to give any further and more definite information to the House. The constitution of the Commission has not yet been determined.

Mr. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): How soon will it be before we get the terms of the reference?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: In the course of a few days I hope, but the hon. Gentleman and the House will see that in a matter of this grave importance great care is necessary.

Mr. DUNCAN (Barrow-in-Furness): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the reference to the Royal Commission on the relations of employer and employed will embrace an examination of the limits set by the existing Law of Conspiracy (by Statute or at Common Law) to lawful combinations in connection with trade disputes, and the consideration of the expediency of amending the law so as to strengthen or extend the right of combination?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have already, I think, replied generally to the question of the hon. Member.

ANONYMOUS EDITORIAL ARTICLES.

Mr. ATKINSON: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will give facilities to enable a Bill to be passed to cause the writers of all editorial articles in newspapers to sign what they write and publish their names with the articles, so that the public may know in each case how much or how little attention is due to each article?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Apart from the fact that it is really impossible for me to ask the House to give precedence to the measures of private Members, the suggestion of my hon. Friend is opposed to the practice of English journalism, and is in restriction of the complete freedom it has hitherto enjoyed. The Government would be unwilling to restrict the liberty which, with rare exceptions, is very far from being abused.

THE CUSTOMS.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any decision has been arrived at with reference to the Memorial forwarded last April by the established messengers of Her Majesty's Customs for an amelioration of their condition?

*Mr. JACKSON: Yes; the Treasury have arrived at a decision, and the Board of Customs are now taking steps for carrying it out.

MALTESE MARRIAGES.

Mr. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the declaration of his Holiness the Pope that marriages celebrated in Malta by all Catholics, whether both or either of the contracting parties be Catholics, are not valid if they are not celebrated according to the form established by the Council of Trent, and to the statement on 18th January, 1890, by Sir Lintorn Simmons to Cardinal Rampolla that Her Britannic Majesty's Government would cause a Project of Law to be introduced in the Council of Government in Malta in accordance with this declaration, whether such a Project of Law has been inteoduced into the Council of Government in Malta; and, if not, whether he is able to account for the delay that has occurred in the matter; and whether Her Britannic Majesty's Government have abandoned the intention of causing such a Project of Law to be introduced in the Council of Government in Malta?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: A Project of Law on the subject of marriage has not yet been introduced into the Council of Government at Malta. In consequence of representations which have been made on behalf of members of the Church of England and other Protestant religious bodies impugning the correctness of the view of the existing marriage law in Malta held by the Law Officers of the Crown in the colony, Her Majesty's Government think it desirable to obtain an authoritative declaration of the law by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council before the Council of Government are asked to legislate on the subject, and they are taking steps for that purpose. Her Majesty's Government have not abandoned the intention of causing a Project of Law to be introduced.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): May I ask what is the method by which it is proposed to obtain the opinion of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not learned as to the processes of law; but I hope that the hon. Gentleman will take it from me that a method will be found of obtaining the opinion of the Judicial Committee.

WORKMEN'S WAGES IN THE DOCKYARDS.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is true, as reported in the newspapers, that the wages of certain classes of workmen are to be advanced; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the Statement or Memorandum of the proposed rates of pay compared with the present rates in all classes affected?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: The report is true, and the addition to the wages of certain classes of workmen is in the aggregate about £74,000 for the financial year ending April, 1892. As the hon. Gentleman will understand, the adjustment in all its details of any revised scale of wages affecting so many classes of workmen requires the very closest supervision before publication. In a few days I hope this task will be completed, and I will then lay on the Table of the House the Memorandum he suggests.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what number of "Rules" have been issued by the Irish Land Commission since its establishment; how many are now in force; and whether he will lay a copy of them upon the Table?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I am informed there were a number of rules from time to time issued by the Land Commissioners appointed under the Act of 1881 up to the 12th December, 1883. On that date the Commissioners issued 151 general rules and orders in relation to proceedings in pursuance of the Act of 1881 or any part of any Act incorporated therewith, and thereby ordered that all previous rules and orders should cease to be in force as regards all proceedings commenced or continued after that date. One hundred and forty-eight of the rules of December 1883, are still in force, but a few of these have been, in some respects, modified by subsequent rules. Since 1883, 59 rules have, from time to time, been issued pursuant to the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 and 1887. Of these 7 have been rescinded, 10 were merely temporary rules, which have expired, and 42 remain in force. Forty-three rules were issued under the Arrears of Rent Act 1882, in respect of which the time for application has long expired. Pursuant to the Labourers (Ireland) Acts 1882 to 1886, 21 rules have been issued, of which 19 are now in force. The first Code of General Rules under the Purchase of Land Act, 1885, was issued on the 14th October, 1885. The second Code was issued on the 5th December, 1887, after the passing of the Act of 1887, and was in substitution of the rules of 1885, Further General Rules were made on the 17th December, 1889, amending, and in addition to, the rules of the 5th December, 1887; and these are the rules now in force in relation to proceedings under the Land Purchase Acts. Copies of all the rules above referred to have been, from time to time, laid upon the Table of the House, as required by the several statutes cited.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Have the rules been collected together in one form?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I believe not.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake to do that?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It is a matter which does not rest in my hands at all. If the hon. Member will put a question on the Paper I will inquire whether there is any objection.

HOLDINGS IN IRELAND.

MR. MAHONY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will grant a Return showing for the Counties of Galway, Mayo, and Donegal the number and extent of holdings over £50 valuation let to be used or used mainly for the purpose of grazing, distinguishing those on which the tenant does not reside, and also of tracts of land, not being demesne land, in the owner's hands used mainly for the purpose of grazing?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am unable to give the whole of the Return asked for; but I believe some of the particulars indicated could be given. In 1889 I had a rough estimate prepared relating to the subject. It would not be practicable to give the extent of the holdings, nor to distinguish as to demesne lands. Subject to these two modifications, I would answer a question at a later date.

CASTLE ISLAND POLICEMEN.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland can he state the cost of keeping three policemen on Castle Island, adjacent to Schull, County Cork, and if the rent is annually £96?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot give the information for which the hon. Member asks to-day. I must, therefore, ask him to defer the question.

PRISONERS AWAITING TRIAL.

SIR R. FOWLER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what progress has recently been made in the improvement of the accommodation of persons awaiting trial at Police and Assize Courts in Ireland?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The question of the accommodation of persons awaiting trial at Police and Assize Courts in Ireland was fully investigated by the Irish Government in 1887 and 1888, and everything possible under the existing law was done to remedy any defects that were brought to light. No complaints have recently been made except as regards Green Street Court House, Dublin. In that case, however, the complaint is against the building generally.

CASE OF MISS QUANE.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland with reference to the case of Miss Quane, who has been sent to gaol at Tipperary on the charge of "hooting the police," would he explain in what the alleged crime consisted, and under what law it is punishable; upon what evidence was Miss Quane convicted; and by whom was the sentence imposed upon her?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must ask the hon. Member to give me a longer notice of this question.

ARMY (MAGAZINE RIFLE, MARK I.).

Address for—

"Return of the numbers of all Mark I. Magazine Rifles sent in for repair or alteration, to Enfield or Birmingham, from first issue up to date."—(*Major Rasch.*)

MOTIONS.

SHERIFF CLERKS DEPUTE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Philipps, Bill to improve the position of Sheriff Clerks Depute whose appointments are recognised in all Acts of Parliament relating to Sheriff Courts in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Philipps, Mr. Haldane, and Mr. M'Ewan.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 235.]

HERRING BRANDING (NORTHUMBERLAND) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Edward Grey, Bill to amend the Law respecting the Branding of Herrings on the coast of Northumberland, ordered to be brought in by Sir Edward Grey, Sir Matthew White Ridley, and Mr. Marjoribanks.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 236.]

DOWAGERS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Atkinson, Bill to relieve landed estates from payments to Dowagers in proportion to the amount of decrease in the net income of such estates since the allowances to the Dowagers were fixed, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Johnston, Mr. Howorth, and Mr. De Cobain.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 237.]

PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE.

*(4.10.) MR. STANSFELD (Halifax): I rise for the purpose of calling attention to the Parliamentary Franchise and its conditions; and to move—

"That, in the opinion of this House, it is needful to amend and simplify the Laws relating to the qualification and registration of Parliamentary Electors; and especially to provide (a) that no person shall be permitted to vote in more than one electoral area during the continuance of one and the same register; (b) that the term of qualification shall be reduced to not more than three months; (c) that registration superintendents shall be appointed who shall be officially responsible for superintending the preparation of accurate Lists of Voters."

If I may form a judgment of the Amendments which have been placed upon the Paper, I should not be disposed to characterise them as being of a whole hearted character. They are either dilatory, obstructive, or evasive. The first I have to refer to is that of the hon. Member for the City (Sir R. Fowler), and it is one of the simplest. The hon. Member proposes that new legislation for registration purposes should not be taken in hand so soon after the passing of the Act of 1885. I do not intend to discuss that Amendment now. Then comes what I understand to be the more serious Amendment of the hon. Member for South Salford (Mr. Howorth). In the latest edition of his Amendment he recognises the desirability of amending the present system of registration; but he does not approve of any alteration whatsoever, however minute, in the existing qualification or condition of the franchise; and he thinks further—and in this respect he is followed by the authors of other Amendments—that no subject of this kind should be entered into, or ought to be considered or entertained, unless at the same time provision is made for the representation of the different parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland proportionately to their population. I come next to the Amendment of the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean), who desires that an adjustment should be made on the basis not of population only, but of taxation and population combined. The Amendment of the hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore) is directed to secure that the representation shall be in accordance with the number of Parliamentary electors. I hope the Members for London will take notice of that fact, because they know, as well as I do, that any qualification of that kind would tell unfairly upon the voters in the Metropolis, who do not get on the register as easily as voters in other localities. In addition to this, the hon. Member for Chelsea desires to retain the freehold qualification. My answer to all objections of this kind is to be found, I think, in the terms of the Resolution. I propose two things—first of all, that it is needful to amend and simplify the law relating to the qualification and registration of Parliamentary electors, and then I specially notify two main subjects by way of illustration as the means by which I propose to carry out that Amendment and simplification. I further propose what is popularly known as the principle of one man one vote. And now let me show for a moment the reason why I think I am entitled to proceed with my Resolution in spite of the Amendments which stand upon the Paper. With regard to that part of it which is concerned with what is called the principle of one man one vote, I am bound to admit that it is controversial matter. But if it raises a controversial question, all I ask is that it shall be discussed, and that we shall not be prevented or discouraged from discussing a proposition in regard to which, on this side of the House, we in a large proportion feel and think very strongly indeed. With regard to the question of registration and qualification pure and simple, it stands on a different footing, and I can hardly call it controversial. The hon. Member for South Salford admits the principle of amending and simplifying the registration system of the country. The present system, in my own view and that of my hon. Friends, is entirely out of date. It originated at a time when the franchise was a restricted franchise, and started from a wrong point of view according to our more modern notions. In olden times, when the franchise was treated as a privilege and not as a right, a great object of legislation was to prevent persons from getting on the register who were not entitled to do so according to the law, or who ought not to be put upon it according to the ideas which prevailed at the time. But the situation has entirely changed since the passing of household suffrage, and the major part of our object now ought to be not so much to keep off people who are not entitled as to put on people who are. The present system is complicated, technical, insufficient, and costly; it is a stumbling block in the way of the ordinary householder, who is not capable of asserting or defending his claim; it is a crying grievance, and its remedy is of urgent importance. This is a part of the question which ought to be dealt with at once. It ought to have been dealt with from the moment that household suffrage became the law of the land. I see no reason why, if these propositions are true, it should be deferred to some indefinite future day. I propose the acceptance of the principle of one man one vote, and what is the answer? That nothing of the kind is to be done until we can initiate some general measure giving to each separate part of the United Kingdom its due and exact proportion of representation according to its population, its population and taxation, or the number of its electors. The meaning of that very general phraseology is that the question of registration shall not be touched until the task of reducing the representation of the Irish people in this House is taken up. In illustration of my statement that our registration system started from the wrong point, I may point out that at present it is a condition precedent to being placed on the register that the rates due on January 6th should be paid before July 20th, and that the assessed taxes should also be paid. It would be a great simplification if that condition precedent were abolished. It would get get rid of a whole crop of technical or *quasi*-technical objections, difficult for the householder to get rid of or to understand. Is there any reasonable objection to doing so? I cannot conceive of any Registration Amendment Bill which does not include amongst its clauses one reducing the necessary period of occupation. My own proposal would be to reduce that period to three months. The immediate effect of that Amendment would be to make the condition precedent to which I have referred an absurdity, for the rates and taxes, payment of which are required, might relate to other premises than those in respect of which the occupation qualification is gained. The personal payment of rates used to be insisted upon in the old Debates as showing that the character of the person paying was such that he was entitled to vote. But the days have passed when the character of the voter can be regarded The country has accepted household suffrage, and must take its chance. Then the compound householder and the lodger pay no rates at all. What virtue is there in making the householder pay poor rates which became due three months before his tenancy began? As to assessed taxes, that is a very small matter now, only applying in the rare case of joint occupiers of a house of £20 annual value and upwards, and I ask whether there is any sense in retaining a technical difficulty of that kind? I would remind the House that Lord John Russell, in the Bill of 1854, actually proposed to abolish all those provisions of the Act of 1832. Another illustration of the technical difficulties in the way of the householder is that if the description of his qualification is inaccurately stated on the list, which might be the fault of the overseer, in respect, for instance, of the name or the situation of the qualifying property, the Revising Barrister has no power to amend it, because in the eye of the law an Amendment would amount to a new qualification. That is altogether absurd. Why should objections be encouraged, and why should a distinct advantage be given to Party objectors, who make it a business to object? If the man is entitled to be upon the register and the qualification is not correctly described, why cannot the Revising Barrister be intrusted with the power of amendment? The Overseers' list ought to be more correct to begin with, because the ordinary householder is not able to defend his own case, and has either to employ legal aid or seek the assistance of some trained person which drives him into the hands of the agent of one or other of the political organisations. I maintain that that is mischievous, and that the system ought to be self-working. It is the duty of the Government to see that every man entitled to vote is put upon the register without trouble, expense, or risk to the man himself. The next point is successive occupation. Successive occupation only applies to the same class of occupation. The lodger must claim successive occupation of lodgings; but if he rises in the world and takes a house of his own, he cannot claim by successive occupation for his vote. I contend that successive occupation ought to mean successive occupation of any qualification. I come now to the question of simplification of the registration and qualification of the voters. I contend for a reduction of the period of qualification and adequate provision for accurate initial lists. The period of qualification for occupiers is at present 12 months, and the 12 months are reckoned from a specific day in the year—the 15th of July. Taking it merely as a 12 months' occupation, on the face of it, is it not preposterous to give household suffrage on these terms, when a large portion of the working classes are weekly tenants, continually changing their dwelling-places according to the location of their work? The case, however, is far worse than appears on the first aspect. If a man enters into occupation on the 16th of July, he will have no claim to be put on the register until two years all but a day have elapsed; and then he will have to wait till the next 1st of January for the publication of the register. In that extreme case he will have to wait nearly two and a half years to exercise the right Parliament has conferred upon him. It is said that to change these conditions is touching the franchise. Why should the franchise not be touched? I maintain that you cannot adequately reform and simplify the system of registration unless the occupiers' qualification be changed in point of term of residence. I have looked closely into this matter, and I have come to the conclusion that to construct a thoroughly amended and simplified scheme of registration, the franchise must be touched as I propose. One of the two keys to the whole thing is the reduction of the qualifying period. That decreases immensely the number of objections and simplifies the whole thing to an extent which those who have not gone into the question would hardly imagine. This proposal of mine to touch the franchise is not introducing anything new to the spirit of the law of household suffrage. Having conferred this privilege on the working classes, Parliament is bound in honour and consistency to make the law correspond in fact with what it intended it to be. The qualifying period, which may extend to 2½ years, merely implies wholesale disfranchisement of the working classes. I propose a three - months' qualification, dating from Lady Day and ending in June. I choose Lady Day because that is the date on which the new Overseers enter on their duties and the rate book is constructed. This proposal would get rid of the difficulties of successive occupation and many other technical objections. But of all these proposed reforms there is none more essential than that which is intended to secure the initial accuracy of the Overseers' lists, and thereby to minimise future labour, cost, and risk. The Overseers are primarily responsible, but we all know that in many parishes, especially rural parishes, the Overseers are untrained men, incompetent for the work of preparing the lists; and deliberately to allow any avoidable inaccuracy in the initial lists in order to correct it afterwards, is manifestly an extravagant and absurd method of going to work. Two things appear to be essential: In the first place, the supervision of the registration in every constituency ought to be under one chief authority, so that the work of the Overseers of different parishes in the same constituency may be prepared with uniformity, impartiality, accuracy and fairness. To secure these desirable results it is eminently necessary to have some suitable supervising power. Any Registration Bill should provide for qualified assistance to the Overseers in every parish. Attempts have been made in that direction, though not successfully; but no one, I think, will deny that in any measure which is passed for registration power should be given to appoint assistants to the Overseers to do the work. There is a strong and growing opinion that to secure accuracy and fairness and complete impartiality within each constituency, there should be some such superior registration officer in each constituency or district as the one to whom I have already alluded. That is the case in Scotland. I do not know whether many English Member is familiar with the law in Scotland; but there the lists are prepared by the valuation officer, the result of whose action is that the initial lists are exceedingly accurate and trustworthy, and that the objections and claims are much fewer. Therefore, I think we should be wise in looking to the example of Scotland, and seeing if we can derive any benefit from the study of the precedent that it affords us. The best method of applying the Scotch principle to English requirements may be, and will undoubtedly when we come to legislate, be a matter for discussion. That is, comparatively, a matter of detail, but I beg leave to state what my opinion is. I do not think that the Overseers ought to be entirely supplanted because of their special knowledge of their own parishes. We ought to keep the Overseers, because we shall not want to duplicate the staff, but they should be directed and corrected by the supervising officer. That, I think, would be an immense improvement. If the lists were improved and made more perfect you would do away with all the subsequent work that would be required if they were less perfect. If you can reduce the number of mistakes in the lists you reduce the work of the registration agents and the Revising Barristers, and effect economy of money and labour. I come, last, to the proposal that no man shall be allowed to have more than one vote. I have said that that is a controversial matter, and I hope it will be thoroughly discussed. As the law stands at present voters may vote in any county and in any borough for which they are qualified. I say, shortly, that that is plural voting. It is one form of plural voting. Plural voting may consist in a man having, as in the case of the election of Guardians, more than one vote at an election in consequence of his possessing more property than other voters. That is, no doubt, a more objectionable system of plural voting; but still, under the present law, a man who possesses more means than another man may vote for several candidates in different constituencies. I could understand that system if he were voting for candidates for several Representative Bodies; but the House of Commons is one Chamber and one Body, and now that the principle of household suffrage has been adopted, on what principle can we maintain the right of an owner of property to multiply his vote, and to vote for a dozen or, perhaps, even for a score of men who are candidates for seats in this House? I say it cannot be defended in argument. That is inconsistent with the principle of household suffrage. It is not merely a theoretical objection that I hold, for I find from a Return which I obtained a couple of years ago that the non-resident ownership voters form nearly one-third of the resident ownership voters. I found that the total non-resident ownership voters were 121,287, as compared with 390,959 resident ownership voters. The figures differ in different constituencies, and the balance of Parties differs in different constituencies; but it is indubitable that there are not a few cases in which the non-resident ownership voters amount to a percentage more than sufficient to turn the tide against a clear majority of the resident voters. Surely that is not just or consistent with the principles upon which the present suffrage is based. I do not propose to go into details on this point, because my right hon. Friend the Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow, who will probably speak later in the Debate, has made this branch of the subject very largely his own. I may add, however, that as far as I know there is no other country with a popular system which allows a system of plural voting. And now I would sum up very shortly the proposition I want to put before the House. I say we protest against plural voting in any shape. We are perfectly prepared to discuss it, and we want to discuss it, but we do not see why we should not oppose it as an objectionable thing to be got rid of in a measure partly for registration reform and partly for the simplification and improvement of the qualification. As to the modification of the franchise which I would propose, the Resolution is confined to a qualification of three months instead of 12. I have given my reasons for that. The hon. Member for South Salford (Mr. Howorth) in his Amendment says we should not touch the franchise, but I have told the House why we on this side think we are entitled to touch it. First, because you cannot practically carry out a successful plan for the simplification of registration without touching that principle; and, secondly, because not to touch it would be to deliberately disfranchise those Parliament and the law have intended to enfranchise. We are told that this cannot be re-considered. There are manifest grievances and injustices connected with the present system, but we are not to be entitled even to approach the consideration of them—that is the extraordinary proposition of the hon. Member for South Salford. That is the latest edition of his Amendment. Though it is desirable to amend the present system of registration, no alteration whatever at present is to be made in regard to the qualification of voters which does not provide that the different parts of Great Britain and Ireland shall be represented proportionately to their population. That seems to be the burden of the song of all these dilatory and obstructive and, I will call them, evasive pleas. What could be more irrelevant to the proposal I have made than to say that it shall not secure assent until the House is prepared to deal with the question of the readjustment of the representation as between Great Britain and Ireland? We have the system of household suffrage, and we regard this system of "one man one vote" as a corollary to the adoption of the system of household suffrage. We say the moment household suffrage was adopted this reform was due, and that there was no need to wait for it. As to waiting until we come to deal with the fighting question of the proportional representation of different parts of the United Kingdom, every one knows that you will never deal with that question in a measure for registration. I say, therefore, it is an evasive plea. It is of the utmost importance that we should simplify the system of registration in order that people may be put on the register without the intervention of agencies. I say it is to the interest of representative institutions that men should be put on the register and kept on without such intervention—that as little as possible should be due to the machinations or plans or offensive or defensive tactics of political or Party agencies. What we should want when we have an election, and what we should like when we come to deal with those great questions which will be placed before the constituencies at the next General Election, is a register possessing upon its pages the name of every man entitled according to the principle of household suffrage to a vote. You want to get at the opinion of every man. That is the object of representative institutions, and all this machinery and these contrivances against which my Motion is directed are simply for not getting at the right opinion of the great mass of the people of the country, but for dealing with the register in the interests of one Party or another. What did the great Sir Robert Peel say?—

> "The battle of the Constitution is to be fought in the Registration Courts. Register, register, register!"

We must mend the existing state of things, I contend, so that the battle of the Constitution shall be fought out here and not on the register. I think I have now brought before the House a case which is well worthy of its favourable consideration, and I conclude by formally moving the Resolution which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That, in the opinion of this House, it is needful to amend and simplify the laws relating to the qualification and registration of Parliamentary Electors; and especially to provide (a) that no person shall be permitted to vote in more than one electoral area during the continuance of one and the same register; (b) that the term of qualification shall be reduced to not more than three months; (c) that registration superintendents shall be appointed who shall be officially responsible for superintending the preparation of accurate Lists of Voters."—(*Mr. Stansfeld.*)

(4.56.) MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): In rising to second the Motion I desire to point out that this subject has been before the House since the early part of the Session of 1886. Session after Session we have had before us—although we have had no opportunity of discussing it—a measure not only containing the principles of the Resolution now before the House, but also laying down legislative machinery for carrying those principles into effect. With regard to the question of the franchise, I think hon. and right hon. Gentlemen opposite ought by this time to have got rid of their fear in regard to the extension of the franchise to the great mass of our people, and, consequently, they ought to get rid of any fear of giving to the people who are rightly enfranchised by Act of Parliament an opportunity of registering their votes. The principles of the registration at present in force are about as absurd as anything that could be put upon the Statute Book. In the first place they absolutely disfranchise people for following their employment. If a man happens to lose his work in one place and goes to another place to find it again he is at once disfranchised. If a number of men have a dispute with their employer, say in the County of Durham, and are evicted from their holdings in consequence, they have disfranchisement by the registration law added to their punishment—disfranchisement for two years at least. The householder does not occupy as good a position with regard to registration as the lodger, for he usually takes possession of his premises on quarter day. If he comes in on the Michaelmas quarter-day, he has to remain all that period and for the succeeding 12 months before he is on the register, and then another three months must elapse before the register is published. So that, under ordinary circumstances, he must be two years waiting for a vote. Then, as to the lodger. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, in resisting the reduction of the franchise, showed that they had more faith in the man who was a householder than in the man who was a lodger, and yet they were willing to disfranchise the former longer than the latter. The lodger may come in at any time. A lodger can come in at any time if, during 12 months, he keeps the same rooms; but his landlord under whom he rents is not entitled, although his residence may actually have been six or nine months longer. Surely that in itself is absurd. Besides, let us get rid of all ambiguities and difficulties attaching to the franchise which may prevent a man exercising the vote Parliament has given him. Either we intend to enfranchise him or we do not. If a man is intended to be enfranchised then let his being placed upon the register be as simple a matter as possible. It seems to me all that should be required is that a man shall have fulfilled the residential qualification, and be known as the person residing at a particular place. Many of us on this side of the House have held for a long time that three months is quite sufficient. Why, too, should not the register come into force immediately after it is revised? Why wait an interval of two or three months? Supposing Her Majesty's Government should, in some fit of patriotism, decide to go to the country this side of Christmas, the result would be we should have to fall back upon a register made up 12 months ago last July. I hold that the entire system is mischievous in the extreme. There is another very important aspect of the question, and that is the want of an officer to look after the registration. Why should hon. Members of this House have to pay the expenses of registration, as they practically have to? The list is practically prepared by the agents of the candidates, and that, in itself, is mischievous in the extreme. Supposing an agent on either side can raise objections to several hundred names on the other side, and the persons named do not attend to substantiate their claims to the franchise, then the Revising Barrister must strike those names off the register, but supposing that both agents combine and submit the names of a few voters, or even one name, omitted by inadvertence from the list, not the efforts of both candidates can get that name, or those names, added to the list, for the Revising Barrister has not the power to make that addition. It is a subject well worthy the attention of the House and of Her Majesty's Government. An hon. Gentleman on the other side of the House has put down an Amendment which I wish had been embodied in the Motion, namely, that all elections should be on the same day. That in itself would cure much of the evil that now exists, and I hope my right hon. Friend will accept the Amendment. I want to see the great mass of the people trusted with the vote. Once they are made citizens, the State will have a right to exact from them the performance of the duties and obligations attaching to citizenship. I think before the next General Election comes upon us we ought to have decided some of these questions. We have other and great questions before the present and future Parliaments without going back from time to time to these questions of Electoral Law. I had hoped that ere this we might have found time to simplify and consolidate our Electoral Laws so that the great mass of the electors might clearly understand under what conditions they are enfranchised, and what duties they have to perform in order to exercise their right of voting. At present the Electoral Law of this country is embodied in something like 182 different Acts of Parliament, and it is in the hope that the House may see its way to assent to this Resolution, and so place the Electoral Law of this country on such a basis that it will compare favourably with that of other countries, that I now second the Motion.

*(5.10.) MR. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): The right hon. Gentleman who introduced this Motion has hung a very wide and far-reaching issue upon a very small and innocent-looking Resolution, and he may find, as others have done

that sometimes the opening of a small door discloses a landscape, not only much wider in extent, but much less inviting than was expected. I think he has already made this discovery; and I confess, further, that a great constitutional change, which has been the occasion, as I understand, of much deliberation among right hon. Gentlemen opposite, was never introduced with more parochial arguments or more commonplace rhetoric. The Resolution embodies three propositions, two of which are unimportant and of little general interest, upon which very little polemic, indeed, is involved. They deal only with details of registration, about which I do not think much difference of opinion arises, and with which the main portion of the right hon. Gentleman's speech was occupied; while the main issue was postponed to a few sentences at the end. The Motion of the right hon. Gentleman involves a very wide question. It, in fact, re-opens the whole question of reform. The Bill of 1885 differed from every other Act in this feature—that it was not the result of the deliberation of Parliament, or of a distinct vote taken in the House; but it was the result of private and diplomatic arrangements between the leader of the House and the leader of the Opposition. In these circumstances it is a little curious that within six years the whole question of reform should be re-opened at the instance of one of the high contracting parties to that treaty. It must not be forgotten that a great many of us who sit in this House, and a great many who do not—who are divided in many ways on particular subjects, were very much distressed indeed by the provisions of that Act as it passed. There were people who cannot claim to belong to the Party to which I belong, but who have been in the forefront of Liberal opinion, who took the same view as some of us here, that the Act preserved a number of anomalies and did not contain a number of safeguards that might very well have been included in it. One right hon. Gentleman opposite, the Member for Liskeard, made a very conspicuous sacrifice of his political fortune on behalf of his views on that occasion. It seems to me that when an Act of Parliament has been passed as a compromise under conditions of that kind, passed distinctly because there was a very great constitutional question impending, which might have been the subject-matter of a revolution, it requires considerable justification to re-open the whole matter so soon again. I see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in his place. That right hon. Gentleman certainly was a chief actor in the arrangement of six years ago, and it is to be hoped that he will not fail presently to give the House some justification for re-opening the whole question of reform, a justification we have not found in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who moved this Resolution. We accepted the Act, because it was admitted to be a more or less peaceful settlement for a considerable period. We none of us expect that the settlement should be absolutely final, but we do think that when a great constitutional question, debated as this was, concluded as this was, is settled by an arrangement between the Leaders on either side, that we ought to have surcease from continual discussion of it, and that it should not within half a dozen years be thrust forward in front of more practical legislation. It would ill-become me to give any advice to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in regard to tactics or Parliamentary strategy for the right hon. Gentleman, as has been well said of him by a friendly critic, combines in his own person the restless activity of Achilles with the consummate craft of Ulysses; but why should he now re-open this question? It was settled by himself when he had a majority at his back, and when the Conservative Party were in a hopeless minority and were obliged to accept what he chose to impose. We were in the palm of his hand—we were as a fly upon a plate. The conditions are now changed—the balance of power is changed—it may be only temporarily changed, but changed it is, and it appears somewhat rash of the right hon. Gentleman opposite to re-open a question in which most of the grievances and anomalies which remain bear hardly rather on the Conservative Party than on the party of the right hon. Gentleman. It may be replied that those who now bring forward this Resolution are the champions of truth and honesty, and are uninfluenced by considerations of expediency. But I do not see in the premisses or conclusions of the right hon. Gentleman any signs of that position. What do we, in fact, see? We find the right hon. Gentleman, who was one of the foremost in the Radical Party, when a number of his colleagues were still unregenerate Whigs, and who, as we find from his speeches of old days, was extremely anxious to avoid all compromise in favour of the most logical application of political principles—we find him taking ground which certainly cannot be called high. Looking over the field of Parliamentary representation and finding it strewn with every form of anomaly and unfairness, he comes to this House and proposes a change, but a change which will not remove all these anomalies, and not even the most conspicuous, but one particular anomaly, comparatively a very small one. We find him urging the removal of an anomaly because such removal will be favourable to his Party, not a removal dictated by principle. I make these general observations failing to find the slightest justification for the introduction of a change involving such wide issues as are contained in the Resolution. I will now join issue rather more closely with the Resolution. I am speaking for no one but myself, but I confess that I do not accept the principle that in the representation of a great Empire the mere personality of the voter is alone to be considered, and that no heed should be paid to the position, or influence, or gifts of such voter. I have always held, and I think that history is more or less on my side, that those communities which have put aside the influence of these characteristics in favour of a mere counting of heads have found that it involves very serious difficulties. A man has claims to vote for a Representative in Parliament other than the mere fact of his existence as a householder. It does not appear to me reasonable that a man who, for instance, has great industrial works in two or three counties, and important duties in those several counties to his *employés* and the community generally, should be deprived of the right of voting in these communities. These views may not be shared by a large number of Members

Mr. Howorth

who are more or less in sympathy with the Amendment I have placed upon the Paper. No doubt they are views which have not flourished during recent years, but I hold them notwithstanding, and it is only fair and candid for me to avow them. But apart altogether from the question whether it is right or wrong that a man who has acquired large wealth and great personal influence by proper means, should have greater political power than the man who possesses neither—apart from this question, it is certainly remarkable that an ex-Cabinet Minister should propose that, whereas men of power, and responsibility, and education should be debarred from undue political power, such undue political power should remain in the hands of sections of the community among whom disloyality is rife, and the main inspiration of their politics. I refer to Ireland. This is really an Irish question, and it is to be regretted that on this occasion the Irish Members should all be absent. [An hon. MEMBER: No, not all.] Well, that only one should be present. If it is right, as the right hon. Gentleman contends that all men should be reduced to a common level of political influence so far as voting is concerned, then the right hon. Gentleman ought certainly to have put into his Resolution the words of my Amendment. It seems almost incredible that anyone should come forward and propose to remove one anomaly, while leaving untouched a far more glaring anomaly of the same kind which is patent and at his elbow. There are six boroughs in Ireland, excluding Dublin and Cork, the whole electorate of which hardly equals the electorate which I represent. A man with large property in three counties is to be denounced if he exercises three times the voting power of an ordinary citizen, and is to be deprived of that privilege, while an Irish Nationalist who lives in Newry or any one of these small Irish boroughs is to be allowed to exercise seven or eight times the electoral power of a constituent of, for instance, the hon. Member for Aberdeen. It seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman would mete out to these Irish peasants in small counties and towns a degree of consideration which he denies to the intelligent voters of Scotland or of Yorkshire. I mention those two areas because the opinions of hon. Members opposite are there dominant. Such a system is ridiculous and absolutely indefensible. Large parts of the United Kingdom are absurdly misrepresented. I cannot understand why Ireland should have 103 Members, and London only 62; and I cannot understand why in London you should have the ridiculous distinctions which exist between such boroughs as St. George's-in-the-East and St. George's-in-the-West, between Chelsea and Fulham, and Islington and Holborn. But we are told that these things cannot be altered; that we are tied in every possible way by special enactments; that the Act of Union in effect limits Irish representation, and makes it impossible, without doing great public injustice, to alter the character of its representation. Why, the Act of Union in these respects has been torn to pieces. The Reform Bill of 1832 made a conspicuous change in the representation of Irish constituencies, and apparently it was never dreamt then that there was any invasion of the provisions of the Act of Union. Anyone who turns to one of the most useful and instructive Debates that have taken place in this House during the last 90 or 100 years, will find that the younger Pitt explained how and why the number of 100 Members was decided upon. At the time when that Act was passed the population of England was two and a half times that of Ireland. The population of Ireland was then 7,000,000, and according to the present view of hon. Members opposite Ireland ought then to have had not 100, but 250 Members. Pitt laid it down that this number of 100 was a useful compromise, and was based, not only on the number of voters or inhabitants, but also on the average of taxes collected. Apart from the question of the Act of Union which has been dragged into these Debates, there is no other argument save the extraordinary one used by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, namely, that it is right and prudent that we should give communities which are far removed from the centre of Government more preponderating political power than those places which are near the seat of Government. If the right hon. Gentleman's view be the right one, then Ulster, which is far from London, compared with Cork, has a most inadequate representation. Why is the North of England or Scotland to be altogether ignored, if we are to accept the right hon. Gentleman's principle? Or again, why is Wales to be ignored? Though it is not so far from London, yet many of its mountainous districts are difficult of access. In Wales, as in Scotland, there are scattered populations remote from the daily newspapers and other essentials of civilised life. It appears that these are parts of our country with claims much stronger than the South and South-West of Ireland. Why Bæotian districts which, when an election comes round, produce 30 or 40 per cent. of illiterates, are to be over-represented in accordance with this magnificent theory of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone), and districts peopled by peaceable and educated people are to be under-represented, is a proposition entirely beyond the capacity of hon. Members to understand who have not had a very large experience of poetry and romance. I have quoted very few figures, because the Returns which have been made to the House are so easy of access. I have tried to argue this question on general grounds of principle. In proposing a great and constitutional change like the one involved in this Resolution, it ought to be justified by some arguments. I can find no arguments of any kind in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stansfeld). But, apart from that altogether, I consider that if we are to effect an alteration at all, it should be on a large scale. We ought to redress not merely one or two anomalies that happen to have a Party advantage for hon. Gentlemen opposite, but we ought to take our stand upon rather broader grounds. This House condenses now a greater political power than even it condensed before—greater than any other Legislative Assembly in the world. For the reason that it is so powerful, we ought to be exceedingly careful that we do not alter its constitution save on logical grounds. If the right hon. Gentleman had been true to his premises; if he had confined his proposition to the redress of the various grievances and anomalies contained in the present Act, we might possibly have met his Resolution in a very different spirit. We feel justified in rejecting his illogical Motion, which is limited to gaining a mere Party advantage by the removal of a small anomaly, and to support the position that if changes in the distribution of political power are to be made, they should embrace on a large and wide scale the anomalies and grievances which exist. I beg to move the Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out all the words after the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "whilst recognising the desirability of amending the present system of the registration of voters, this House is of opinion that no alteration of the present laws regulating the qualification of voters can be considered which does not at the same time provide that the different parts of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland shall be represented proportionately to their population,"—(*Mr. Howorth,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question.'

*(5.40.) MR. WHITMORE (Chelsea): I rise to second the Amendment of my hon. Friend. I have myself on the Paper an Amendment which distinctly affirms the desirability of amendments of the Registration Laws, and of retaining the non-residential property qualification; but, as I do not wish to trouble the House with successive Amendments, and as I am substantially in agreement with my hon. Friend, I give my support to his proposition instead of submitting my own. We on this side of the House, I think, have no objection to an amendment of the Registration Laws, holding that the qualified voter should be enabled to effect registration as quickly and as cheaply as possible. We believe that technicalities which stand in the way of the accomplishment of that object are obsolete and mischievous. For my own part, I should certainly be only too glad to see, instead of our most capricious system, which depends on the casual activity of political parties, some fair-working State system which would enable the qualified voter to get on the register without trouble or expense. But these are not the points to which the Motion is addressed. The central and essential object of the Resolution is, of course, summed up in the well known formula—"one man one vote." The Motion if carried would commit this House to preventing in future any system giving a plurality of votes, and each vote would be of exactly the same value throughout the country. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Stansfeld) has left the burden of maintaining that proposition to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division; and the hon. Seconder in like manner avoided it, and confined himself to details of registration. We have not had a single argument in support of that which is virtually a large measure of disfranchisement. I have failed to find any historical authority during this century for such a measure of disfranchisement as is proposed by the Motion. John Stuart Mill, writing on Parliamentary Reform in 1859, expressed the view that the ideal representative system would be one under which there would be an ample suffrage coupled with a plurality of voting power proportioned to educational ability. I do not contend that a system of that kind could be practically established, but I think it well that the House should be reminded of Mill's view. I hold that the present system of plural voting is fair and defensible. In each separate constituency the vote of each voter has an equal value. And, in the theory of our Constitution, it is the locality which is represented in Parliament. If a man, who in one locality employs labour, pays rates, discharges local duties, is to lose his vote simply because in another locality he is entitled to a vote, the interests of the first locality would cease to be accurately reflected, and an injustice would be done to the man. So there is never any local invidiousness, any sense of local superiority or inferiority. The right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division has announced that if the formula "one man, one vote" were but once swallowed a Party would be returned to power that would give the people "a new heaven and a new earth."

*SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): A much greater man than the Member for the Bridgeton Division used that expression in connection with Parliamentary Reform. It was Mr. John Bright.

*MR. WHITMORE: Yes; but the right hon. Gentleman said that "one man one vote" would produce this transformation, and possibly rustic labourers and miners when they hear statements of that kind feel inclined to vote for the abolition of the present system, but I do not believe that if concrete examples of the working of it were put before the people they would think it either unjust or inexpedient. The system in no way prevents the wage-earning class from gaining their objects by means of legislation. Supposing the wage-earning class were to demand persistently and unanimously a universal eight hours Bill, who could doubt that such a measure would be passed under the present system of plural voting in spite of the fact that the feeling of the educated classes is strongly unfavourable to such a measure? The object of the Resolution is to give to every vote an equal value, but if it were carried and if no redistribution followed there would be no real equality. The vote of the Irish elector would have an infinitely greater value than the vote of the English elector. The Amendment, therefore, is very relevant to the Resolution. Asking that the principle of equality should be logically applied, it would entail redistribution under which the North of Ireland would obtain votes at the expense of the South and West of Ireland, England would obtain votes at the expense of Ireland, and London and the more progressive, more contented, and therefore more Conservative parts of England would obtain votes at the expense of remote and less prosperous districts. But the present time I think is singularly inopportune for the introduction of such change. All the best minds on the other side of the House must, I suppose, be occupied with the problem how to frame a Home Rule Bill which will satisfy both the hon. Member for Cork and the right hon. Member for Derby, and on my own side of the House the leaders are pledged by the events of 1886 to reconstruct the agrarian system of Ireland, and to propose for her a measure of County Government. And, while the minds of statesmen have been thus pre-occupied, a spontaneous wave of popular feeling has thrust upon them the consideration of the grave, delicate, and complex problem, of the relations between Labour and Capital. Statesmen, therefore, have not the leisure necessary for the consideration of the far-reaching questions involved in the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman. That Motion is inexpedient, is brought forward simply to satisfy a Party cry, and can result in no real or permanent good to the people.

(5.59.) MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Although there are portions of the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the Amendment which I heard with regret, I think that, upon the whole, it will be obvious to the House that already progress has been made in and by this Debate. It has been admitted both by the Mover and the Seconder—and I venture to hope, and even to presume, that after their admissions it is not likely to be denied—that the system of registration admits and requires amendment. Now, what is the meaning of that? The meaning of that is that a body, and evidently a considerable body, of our fellow subjects have a distinct political grievance. Let us see what this signifies and what it intends. If there are in the country a body of persons whom Parliament has declared to be qualified and entitled to vote for Members of Parliament, and if by the mechanical arrangement of your Registration Law you have so ill-adjusted the conditions of your electoral system that large numbers—many thousands, aye, even tens of thousands of men are kept off the register and away from the power of voting which Parliament in principle has given them—that is a political grievance. In regard to that political grievance it appears that there is a union of opinion. If there be that union of opinion, what is the reason why the grievance should not be removed? If my right hon. Friend has included in his measure other matters upon which hon. Members have a difference of opinion, the consistent course for them to take is not to block the Bill of my right hon. Friend by a hostile Amendment, and thereby prevent the removal of a political grievance which they themselves have admitted and confessed ought to be removed. Their proper course would be to carry the Bill of my right hon. Friend into Committee, and there to avail themselves of the majority which they know they possess.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): It is not a Bill.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Well, then, it is a Resolution intended to be followed by a Bill. If it were not I should feel very little anxiety to support it. I say they themselves ought to allow this plan to go forward and be dealt with as a Bill in Committee, and at that stage endeavour to exclude from the Bill that which they deem to be dangerous. I was sorry to hear in the speech of the Mover of the Amendment attacks on the Irish people, which I do not think added anything to the strength of his case, and which on general grounds would better have been omitted. I would wish, however, to relieve the mind of the hon. Mover of the Amendment with respect to one particular to which he appeared to attach great force, and where he is, no doubt, in historical error. He stated that the Franchise Bill was the result of a diplomatic arrangement, and that that diplomatic arrangement was intended to convey, and did convey, an assurance not of absolute finality, but of that kind of relative finality which is sometimes perfectly well understood to attach to political measures. Sir, the Franchise Bill was in no respect the result of a diplomatic arrangement. The Franchise Bill was passed in this House in 1884, and was thrown out in the House of Lords; but the apology made for throwing out that Bill was always a reference to the difficulties of a system of redistribution of seats. The redistribution of seats, it may be said, was the result of an arrangement between the two Parties in the House, and possibly the argument of the hon. Member might have some relevance as far as that is concerned. But as far as the Franchise Bill is concerned, so far from its having been proposed as a measure which in its then shape was final, it was a measure the entire principle of which was absolute simplicity. We confined the announcement of a great principle, a great proposition, as far as possible within the very narrowest limits, because we knew that if we attempted to conjoin with the assertion of that principle a multitude of amendments of our system in detail we should become lost in the wilderness of that detail, and the opportunities of opposition would be multiplied a hundredfold—we should become ourselves, through a defective arrangement, the assassins of our own progeny. Our endeavour, therefore, was to set aside everything which, though thought to be an improvement—and it was stated so in the Debates of the time—interfered with the simplicity of the proposition, and consequently it was open to amend, enlarge, and develop in respect to accessory matters and principles in relation to registration and the improvement of our system, without the smallest regard to any arguments which could be drawn from finality or a diplomatic understanding. I merely follow what was stated by my right hon. Friend in a speech which the mover of the Amendment thought parochial, but which I confess, to my less fastidious or less experienced taste, seemed to be a very sound, able, and statesmanlike exposition in connection with this subject. We now have a system under which a person declared by Parliament to be qualified to vote may remain for three and a half years without getting a vote, if it so happens that he enters upon his premises on the wrong day of the year. I admit it is accidental, but I am going to mention the minimum as well as the maximum time. But if his opportunity of voting does not come until 12 months after the period of his registration, then, undoubtedly, two and a half years become three and a half years. No doubt the minimum time is one and a half years—there cannot be a difference of opinion about these matters of fact—while by the Bill of my right hon. Friend two and a half years or three and a half years would be reduced to one year and nine months, and the 18 months would be reduced to three months; and that is long enough. I wish it could be made shorter. I do not know whether good arrangements might make it shorter. Any unnecessary delay constitutes a grievance to the person qualified to vote and to be placed on the register, and consequently the removal of that grievance ought not to be withheld because at the same time it is proposed to do something else along with it which the majority deem to be exceptionable. The right hon. Gentleman answered me a moment ago that this was not a Bill.

It is just as easy, or rather easier, to amend the Resolution of my right hon. Friend than it would be in Committee to amend a Bill. Therefore if there be on the part of hon. Members a real sincere opinion, which I am bound to believe there is after the declarations in the last two speeches, that the present system of registration inflicts a grievance on those who are qualified to vote and are deprived of the opportunity, it is quite fair from their point of view and to maintain their consistency that they should amend the Resolution of my right hon. Friend by excluding from it what relates to "one man one vote," and allow the rest to go forward and give it their support. So much for registration, and I am anxious to know what answer is made to that plea. It is the duty of those who admit the existence of a grievance to apply to it a remedy. Now, with respect to plurality of voting. I confess I heard with great regret an observation in the speech of the Seconder of the Amendment, because he referred to the possession of a dominant influence by the working classes in our electoral system, and he used it as an argument on behalf of the plural vote that if the working classes were at some period or other to demand with absolute unanimity the passing of a universal Eight Hours Bill the plural vote would be of great value to resist it.

*MR. WHITMORE: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon; I said nothing of the sort. I said rather the opposite—that the maintenance of the plural vote would be powerless to prevent the passing of that Bill.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Then why was it used as an argument for the plural vote? I will not say it was stated that it would prevent the passing of the Bill, but, undoubtedly, as far as I understood the purport of the argument, it was referred to as an argument for the plural vote—that it was by means of a plural vote that the other classes of the community would be able to retard the passing of such a measure.

*MR. WHITMORE: I am very reluctant to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman; but I cannot allow those words to be put in my mouth. I said the exact opposite. My whole argument was that there was no practical injustice in the plural vote, because it would not prevent the demand of the wage-earning classes from being carried into law if they were unanimous in favour of such a proposition.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Then I certainly misunderstood the hon. Gentleman. It seemed to me from the hon. Member's speech that in his opinion the plural vote would be of great value to the other classes of the community, if they were under the necessity of drawing on their whole resources, of increasing their means of resistance to an almost unanimous demand by the wage-earning classes. Then that is not an argument for the plural vote. It is now loudly professed from the other side of the House that it is no part of the value of the plural vote to increase the weight of the upper classes where their judgment might come into collision with that of other classes. I trust that the hon. Gentlemen who sit near the hon. Seconder of the Amendment will dismiss that argument from their minds, and will confess that the plural vote is of no value whatever for that purpose. Then why is the plural vote to be maintained? The hon. Member—and I do not think I misunderstood his argument—has brought me to the perception of another valuable political truth, which I hope will be universally accepted on both sides of the House. I am afraid he will find that it very much weakens the power of hon. Members on that side of the House and their allies on this side to maintain the plural vote. The hon. Member says he relies upon the authority of John Stuart Mill. He says that John Stuart Mill was in favour of the plural vote. Yes; but of a plural vote as absolutely different and as directly contradictory in every point to the present plural vote as can be. Mr. John Stuart Mill, looking at this matter with the eye of a philosopher, virtually framed his ideas by the principle laid down by Mr. Burke—namely, that wisdom and virtue are the true titles to government. And Mr. Burke in that remarkable declaration does not admit any other title to government. Mr. John Stuart Mill wished to have wisdom and virtue, and to adapt the measure of political power that each individual was to enjoy to the amount of wisdom and virtue which he might be happy enough to possess. But what have wisdom and virtue to do with the present plural vote? It is a plural vote by lottery. It is not the best of the upper classes or the wisest of the upper classes, or even the wealthiest of the upper classes—though I hold that to be the meanest of all titles to preference—it is not any one of these categories of persons who enjoy the plural vote. It depends upon whether you have property or lodging within a privileged precinct; whether you have kept your name on the University rolls, or have taken it off; whether your property happens to lie in one county or in more than one county. It is a pure lottery, and has no connection whatever with wisdom, with rank, with traditional respect, with excellence of character, with distinguished talent or public service—with no one of these things has it the smallest connection whatever. I say that if it were to be done by a lottery—confined, I admit, to those who are not working men; for the one virtue of this system, if it be a virtue, is that the working man is excluded from it, and in no case possesses it—— [*Ministerial cries of* "Oh!"] Well, you may produce one. It is like the gentleman who on a fine day rashly made the observation that there was not a cloud in the sky; and presently, a little speck of gray appearing at one point of the horizon, said, "I think I see one." You may find a working man who has got the plural vote, but it is the rarest case possible. What I imagine people mean when they justify this plural vote is this:—they mean that, after all, these elements of talent, knowledge, education, high character, principle, and even wealth, ought to be represented in addition to mere numbers. About the absolute title of property to such a representation I will not say anything. It is not necessary to enter upon the argument; but I am not sure that I should admit a great deal of such a title; because, looking back over the history of this country for some time, I am unable to perceive that the opinions and convictions of the people at large upon the great questions on which our history has turned during the last 50 years have been in any way inferior in soundness and wisdom to the opinions of the more highly educated classes. Unhappily, there are a great many instances which might be adduced in proof of the contrary. But as regards character, knowledge, education, and talent, I am disposed to admit that there is a title to a certain extent, and that the man who possesses brains, or the man who possesses very high moral qualities and a long experience of life, ought to weigh more in an election than a man who does not possess them. But I assert that he does weigh more. I assert that the entire disposition of the people of these countries is to allow a full scope, to do full justice—and even more than justice—to all these elements and claims; that an Englishman or a Briton, and the Irishman too, if you give him a fair position from which to start—and the Irishman possibly more than any of them if he were in a natural and normal position—that all these are strongly disposed to attach weight to the judgments of those who are their superiors in temporal circumstances, and to follow such persons in the disposition of their franchise. This is a fact of common experience. Our proposition is that all that weight which is due to elements of character such as I have described is already possessed and will be possessed. But it is a very different thing indeed to maintain a system of plural voting which is not connected with the true elements of claim to superior weight. I must observe that what the hon. Member, in the explanation which he has given, has shown, as he thought, is merely that plural voting is harmless. But what we want to know is—What is the claim to plural voting? It is right that you should be able to substantiate in a positive way some claim to superior fitness. Why is one man to have five or six votes when his fellow-citizen has only one vote? I have not heard in the speeches of the hon. Mover or Seconder of the Amendment any attempt to make out such a claim. I do not think I need trouble the House further with the plural vote; I will come to the Amendment. I cannot understand the process of reasoning by which either the hon. Mover or Seconder of the Amendment has arrived at the conclusion that such an Amendment is legitimately connected with such a Motion. They are admittedly going to refuse the removal of a grievance, and why? Because they also have a grievance. The point of the Amendment is this: There is no doubt that England is the one division of the four countries which may be called nationalities which is in a condition to obtain some 15 or 20 additional seats. I will put myself, then, in the position of an Englishman, and I ask—What argument can possibly be more inconsequent than this? Already, as an Englishman, on the principles of the Amendment, I am insufficiently represented. That is a grievance of itself; and because I am suffering from that grievance, the hon. Mover and Seconder of the Amendment insist upon keeping me under another grievance—namely, that I cannot get upon the register. Was ever such an argument submitted to the House? Multitudes of Englishmen are already suffering, and suffering doubly; first, because the country is not sufficiently represented; and, secondly, because they may be kept off the register; and the argument put by the hon. Mover and Seconder is, "We will not put you on the register because you are already suffering, as an Englishman, from insufficient representation." That is a true statement of the case, and cannot be got rid of by any interpretation, however ingenious or true. What is really this case? In the first place, I must observe upon the generosity of the course which is now pursued. It is quite true that at the present moment, with difficulty and with effort, we have got Scotland up to, or about up to, its fair proportion of representation; but I am not sure whether it is yet what it ought to be. It is also true that Wales has a very few—some three or four—seats more than, upon a strict apportionment of seats, it would have. It is also true that Ireland, with its diminished population, has a larger number of seats by, I believe, some 16 or 18 than would belong to it upon a purely numerical appropriation. How long has this been so? England sat contentedly enough as long as Scotland was paid off with 40 Members, while England had 500. England sat contentedly enough while 100 Members were given to Ireland at the Union, when the population of Ireland was not quite so large as was supposed by the hon. Mover of the Amendment, but when it gave a return of nearly one-third of the entire population of the United Kingdom. And, as to Wales, what attention was ever given to any Welsh question or interest in this House by this mass of English Representatives until within the last five or six years? All these inequalities were borne contentedly enough; but now, forsooth, when by the aid of the microscope and arithmetical tables you find that England has a few Members less than she would have if mathematics were to settle the whole affair, you make this a reason why the political grievance in regard to registration should continue. What is the position now? Here is a partnership of four people—England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. What is the proportion and the position of the one partner to remedy whose lamentable and woeful case this Amendment has been framed, and will, I suppose, be passed by a majority this evening? In that mercantile firm, where there are four partners—and I suppose that the conception of a mercantile firm is a sufficiently good illustration—one of them has more than two-thirds of the whole voting power, and undoubtedly he has made use of that vast preponderance, and has taken care that his affairs, at any rate, should have the first place and the first consideration through the course of our history. No man free from political bias can examine for a moment the case of Ireland with regard to its practical legislation—quite apart from the sore subjects which divide the minds and exasperate the hearts of men—without seeing in how backward a condition the legislation of that country has been left, an observation I may also make with regard to Wales. England has more than two-thirds of the representation. The three other partners very rarely combine together; but if they do they are overborne by the enormous weight of the English Representatives. This is not a thing occurring on one day; it occurs every day. In Welsh, Irish, and Scotch questions—in matters where they are entitled to decide for themselves—the other partners are borne down, over-ruled, and cast out of the precincts of this House by the enormous preponderance of the English vote. That is the practical state of the case. There is also this to be said: This partner, who has more than two-thirds of the whole voting power, invariably provides that the business shall be transacted by his own fireside. He does not want to go out and be exposed to cold frosts and biting winds, but prefers to remain at home. Is that no advantage to England? The hon. Gentleman opposite made the observation that there was hardly an Irish Member in the House. Why are not the Irish Members present? The reason is that, whatever you may do by rail and steam, distance is still an impediment, locomotion is still a reality, requiring time, cost, and distraction from private affairs. The hon. Member's observation shows that the representation of Ireland is on the whole and for ordinary purposes—I do not speak of great occasions—less efficient than it would be if Ireland were a portion of this country. The representation of England is fairly adjusted. I am not ashamed to say that I think upon the whole England is not entitled to complain. I think her enormous preponderance, the vast power she possesses, and the use she makes of it by regulating the affairs of those other portions of the United Kingdom, not by their sentiments but by her own, show that if there is a grievance that grievance is not upon her side. The enormous preponderance she is entitled to and must always possess makes this Amendment a proceeding totally impracticable. I do not believe that either the Mover or Seconder of the Amendment, or any hon. Gentleman opposite, believes that ever again or within any measurable time the scales will be readjusted with the view of establishing an exact numerical representation as regards the four countries. But whether that be so or not, it is surely a strong plea which we are entitled to make to the independent judgment of this House — I suppose there is some independent judgment in the House—not to say that what is now one of the grievances of many Englishmen shall not be remedied because they suffer from others. If we are here for the purpose of doing as much good as we can agree upon, then accept what you admit in the proposition to be in itself desirable, and let us at least have the consolation of thinking that some good has been effected with a unanimity which, unhappily, does not always attend our proceedings.

(6.36.) Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I am very happy to be able to agree with a good deal of what fell from my right hon. Friend in the early part of his speech, and indeed I must candidly say that I enter upon the consideration of this subject more perhaps from his standpoint than from that of the Mover or Seconder of the Amendment. My right hon. Friend has pointed out what I think is generally admitted—that a real grievance has been established in connection with registration. He has pointed out that those to whom it was intended that the franchise should be given are prevented from exercising it owing to the technicalities, the complications, and costliness of the existing system. My right hon. Friend goes on to ask why, having admitted this grievance and acknowledged its urgency, do you not accept this Resolution of the right hon. Member for Halifax so far, at all events, as that portion is concerned, and with the knowledge that in accepting it you pledge yourselves to the immediate introduction of a Bill. My right hon. Friend will himself see he lays himself open to an answer in the shape of another question. We might say to my right hon. Friend—You thought this matter urgent six years ago; you put it in the forefront of your manifesto to the electors, you won the election on it, and every one was led to believe the reform of registration would be the first point to which you would call the attention of the House. Why was it put aside? "Why," my right hon. Friend would say, "because more urgent business intervened." If so, it is also open to Her Majesty's Government to consider whether even now more urgent business does not intervene to prevent them dealing with this matter, which is admittedly of importance, but which may yet have to be postponed a little longer. I agree also with much of what my right hon. Friend said about plural votes. I have expressed myself often in public upon this subject, and I am pledged to the view that plural voting is inconsistent with the principles of our present suffrage. I believe that plural voting is doomed, and that sooner or later we must have uniformity of franchise. I am unable to agree with the Seconder of the Amendment that this is a proposal to disfranchise the plural voter. It is not intended to disfranchise a single voter; it is only intended to take from some voters a plurality of voting power, a greater power than is possessed by the majority. But, after all, there are other considerations which have to be taken into account. This Resolution is one of those which come within the category of abstract Resolutions, and if the Government accept this abstract Resolution it will be necessary for them to interpose—to alter their programme and to interpose this business between the House and the business it has already undertaken. An abstract Resolution is, of course, the commonest of the weapons used by the Opposition against the Government. It is an invidious and therefore it is a rather formidable weapon. It is generally applied to some subject upon which it is expected there will be considerable support given to the Resolution on the part of the Government and its supporters. Then it puts the Government in this dilemma; that if they accept the Resolution they have to alter their programme; and, on the contrary, if, while admitting the merits of the Resolution, they decline to proceed, they are held up to scorn and reprobation, as standing between the country and a most desirable reform. Under these circumstances, it is rather interesting to consider how in times past this very serious weapon has been turned aside. I suppose no Minister was ever subjected to so many abstract Resolutions as my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, and I am sure he will agree that on many occasions he has put forward a very stiff doctrine in regard to the subject. I have been looking—rather hastily, but in such time as I could spare—at the history of the Parliament which sat been 1880 and 1885 in order to see what doctrines my right hon. Friend laid down for our guidance with regard to abstract Resolutions. I do not think his doctrine is quite so stiff in the later periods as at some previous stages of his career; but coming from such a master of Parliamentary tactics we may rely upon it that we shall find precedents which will be extremely instructive. I find that on June 10, 1881, Mr. W. Fowler moved a Resolution against the perpetuation of life estates, and, of course, it is perfectly well known that the abolition of entail and life estates is a cardinal doctrine of the Liberal Party. Accordingly, my right hon. Friend expressed his agreement with the terms of the Motion; but he deprecated the practice of the Government pledging themselves to loose and vague promises as to what they will do on some future occasion, and thereby endeavouring to gain popularity without being able to deal with the practical difficulties that must be met on giving them effect. And on those grounds—which appear to me to be extremely weighty—he urged the withdrawal of the Resolution, and I believe the House was counted out. In 1882 the hon. Baronet the Member for Somerset (Sir R. Paget) moved a Resolution in favour of the relief of Local Taxation. That question gave no little trouble between 1880 and 1885. The position of the Government was this—that it held that a certain case had been made out for some relief, but that it was not prepared to give effect to its opinion at the moment, and, accordingly, on this occasion the proposal was resisted by my right hon. Friend on the ground that the Government were pledged to deal with the question, and the Previous Question was moved as an Amendment, and, I believe, was carried by a small majority. On the 21st of March in the same year there arose a Debate which is still more interesting and instructive—it was on the Motion of Mr. Arnold for uniformity of the franchise. My right hon. Friend voted for this Resolution, and therefore made an exception to his ordinary practice of opposing abstract Resolutions; but I think it will be seen at once that the exception proves the rule. He accepted the Motion with great hesitation; he repeated his scruples with regard to abstract Resolutions; he said it was a dangerous thing to live on promises instead of performances; and he said that it was only in the peculiar and exceptional circumstances of the House, owing to the obstruction that prevailed at the time, and to the state of public business, that he consented to vote for the Resolution. I think that subsequent events justified the line which my right hon. Friend took on that occasion, because this Motion for which he then voted was a Motion for the uniformity of the franchise, and Mr. Arnold laid especial stress on the principle of one man one vote. Accordingly, my right hon. Friend in accepting the Resolution accepted the principle of one man one vote. According to his doctrine, he gave a pledge to give practical effect to that principle on the first opportunity; but when the time came in 1885 I suppose there were reasons of sufficient importance which induced him not to include the principle of one man one vote in the Bill he then brought in. I think the exception he made on this occasion was one he must afterwards have had cause to regret. Only one more illustration. In 1883, when Mr. Pell renewed the Motion in favour of the relief of Local Taxation, how was it met? Mr. Albert Grey met it with an Amendment which practically admitted the justice of the claim whilst protesting against an incomplete settlement of the question, and expressing the preference of the House for a complete settlement of the question of Local Government as well as of Local Taxation. Now what happened? Hon. Members of the then Opposition side of the House got up, and in a sceptical and disagreeable manner observed that this plea was a dilatory plea. They said what my right hon. Friend has just said about the Amendment of the Member for South Salford. But my right hon. Friend at that time indignantly protested against any such proposition, and claimed the right of the House and the Government to put forward this Amendment claiming a complete settlement of the question. From these accounts I draw three conclusions. In the first place, that it is dangerous and dishonest for a Government to make any promises without the intention or the power of immediately performing them. [*Opposition cheers.*] Really I had no idea that was a novel doctrine; hon. Gentlemen seem as pleased with it as if they had never heard it before. In the second place, I gather that, even when a Government agrees, or agrees generally, with a Motion which may be brought forward in this way as an abstract Resolution, as it is entitled to settle its own order of business, unless it is prepared to put the subject of the Resolution in the very forefront of its business it is bound to meet it either by an Amendment or a negative. And I gather, in the third place, that it is a legitimate and proper way of meeting a proposal for the incomplete settlement of a great question by an Amendment which demands or expresses a preference for a complete settlement. The Resolution of my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax deals only with one little corner of the Reform question. Now, does my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian believe with his great experience, that it would be possible for the Government to introduce a Bill dealing with this little corner without having the whole Reform question re-opened? Is it conceivable that, when there are so many anomalies, the House is going to allow separate Bills each dealing with one of them and not to say a word about the others? My right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board (Mr. Ritchie) brought in an infinitesimal Bill—I hope I am not describing the measure improperly—for the amendment of a particular branch of the registration question, and thereupon Amendments were put down raising the whole question, which it would take months to settle. If that happened with one single branch of the question of registration, would it not certainly happen in the case of a Bill which is to remove a great anomaly in the suffrage as well as to deal with the whole question of registration? The question I have to ask myself is this: Is the alteration which is proposed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax of sufficient importance to justify a separate and distinct Bill; and, if so, is it possible for the House to give to it that separate treatment? I have said that I think there is a general admission on the part of the House that something should be done—and the more speedily the better—in order to amend the present system of registration; but I am by no means certain that it would be wise to accept the proposals actually made by my right hon. Friend. He proposes that the term of occupation should be reduced to three months; but, if it were so reduced, would it not lead to great abuse? Would it not be possible in certain cases which might easily be imagined to flood a constituency with new voters in order to turn an election? [*Cries of* "No."] If it is said to be impossible, I say it has been done. In America I have heard of a good many cases where a precisely similar thing happened. I am not certain that there was not one Presidential election which was carried or considerably influenced by the practice of one of the Parties in the State in importing a number of black citizens a few weeks or months before the election took place. Then my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax did not argue the question of "one man one vote," but left it to my right hon. Friend the Member for the Bridgeton Division. I wish my right hon. Friend (Sir G. Trevelyan) had got up at the moment and seconded the Resolution, because he was in a position to give the best possible answer to my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax when he asks, "Why do not you deal with the franchise?" The right hon. Member for Bridgeton, speaking in 1885 upon the Reform Bill, then before the House of Commons, said—

> "This Bill is neither a limited nor a half-and-half measure, and if it is passed I expect that no man living will be troubled with the question of the franchise again. This Bill takes in all the householders of the country, and, leaving aside the question of sex, settles everything else upon a permanent and solid basis. It admits those who should be admitted, and it excludes all who should be excluded."

If that Bill was exactly the right thing, why has it become necessary to alter it now? I am bound to say I am not quoting this because I agree with it, but because it affords one answer, if not the best answer, to my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax. My objection to dealing with the question of "one man one vote" is certainly not on the merits of the proposal. I have said already that I have spoken on more than one occasion in favour of uniformity of the franchise and in favour of several other things in regard to which I have no idea that the majority of the House will be inclined to agree with me. I have spoken in favour of Manhood Suffrage. Is my right hon. Friend (Mr. Stansfeld) in favour of Manhood Suffrage, and, if he is, why did not he put it into his Resolution? I have spoken in favour of payment of Members, and of equal electoral districts. I am still in favour of all these reforms. Is my right hon. Friend in favour of them? If he is in favour of these alterations, and if he had put them in his Resolution, we should, at all events, have had a real and important issue. But he has laid himself open to this accusation or suspicion—that out of the vast field of reform which still remains to be covered he has picked out a little corner which may be expected to give to his Party some half a dozen seats, while he has left out of account altogether other great reforms which undoubtedly would tell heavily against him. I hear my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby say, "Why would Manhood Suffrage tell against him?" I do not know that it would; but I was referring more particularly to equal electoral districts. But it must be remembered that we have to deal with anomalies; and if we are to do so, the right hon. Member for Halifax is himself an anomaly, and I am afraid we shall have to dispense with his genial presence in this House. He represents a borough with a population of 73,000, which sends two Members to Parliament. I represent a borough which is six times as large, and which sends only seven Members to Parliament. That is a grievance if you like, and a much greater grievance than any grievance about plural voting as it now exists. Take another case. I made a calculation before the last Reform Bill, and I have continued it now. Before 1867 the majority of this House was returned by one-sixth of the electorate. After 1867 the majority was returned by one-fifth, and at the present time the majority is returned by very slightly more than one-third. There, I say, you have really important anomalies which some day it may be necessary and desirable to remedy. But is it desirable to remedy them now? A reform agitation is one of the most absorbing agitations you can possibly have. Therefore, to renew a reform agitation means distinctly the postponement of every other reform for the time. Again, reform is not an end. It is a means to an end. The people do not want reform solely in order to have the pleasure of having a vote, but they want it in order that they may use their votes and that their Representatives may do something which they want and which they think will conduce to their advantage. What was the state of things before 1885? Then, if you like, you had a serious grievance which it was absolutely necessary to remedy. You had a majority of the population absolutely excluded from representation — a majority of capable citizens were without the suffrage. You had at the same time such an extraordinary difference in the value which was given to the vote in different cases, that whereas 40 Members in certain constituencies were returned by 250,000 people, it took 6,250,000 to return 40 Members in other constituencies. What was the consequence? The consequence of that misrepresentation of the people of England was that the interests of large classes were unrepresented or insufficiently represented. The artisans were hampered by the way in which the vote was distributed, and the agricultural labourers were practically without representation. Reforms were stayed; they could not be proceeded with for want of a change, and I say that that justified the agitation and turmoil which prevailed. But surely the people who made those sacrifices in order to obtain this improvement of machinery expect that when you have got your improved machine you will turn to and use it, and not begin to tinker at it. Surely they have a right to expect that as in times past, as the Reform Bill of 1832 was followed by a number of reforms, and it was not until those reforms were settled or exhausted that a new Reform Bill was brought in —as the Bill of 1867, in like manner, brought social, political, and material reforms to the advantage of the people, so also the Reform Bill of 1884-5 should be fruitful in good work before you again ask the people of this country to stand aside, to give up all hope of material improvement once more in order to reform the suffrage and the representation. I maintain that at this time, at all events, you have no mandate to begin reform over again. You have enough of reform for any reasonable purpose. You have a House which now is both willing and capable to deal with questions which I believe are first in the hearts of the people. If that is the case, then, when did you change your mind? Do you mean to say that an interval of five years has made such a difference that you are now in favour once again of renewing the Reform Bill controversy? What did my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax say upon this subject? I came across the other day a little book which I daresay many Members would wish to have strictly suppressed, but it really is very interesting. It is called *Politics of the House of Commons*, and it professes to give the politics of all Members of the House of Commons elected in 1885, as derived from their election addresses and the speeches which were made immediately preceding. I turned to this little book to see what my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax had said upon that subject. Remember this, that Reform Bill had passed, and therefore he knew at this time its imperfections. And what did he say? He spoke at Shoreditch on October 21, 1885, and he put forward his programme, following very much the lines upon which I have been aspiring. He said that now the people would expect that Parliament would set to and do their work, and deal with the arrears which had been allowed to accumulate so long. In the first rank he put Reform of Procedure in the House of Commons; in the second rank he put Local Government; in the third rank he put the Land Laws; and in the fourth Free Education. Nowhere did he put "one man, one vote." On October 27 my right hon. Friend was speaking at Halifax to his own constituents. He repeated his programme. At this time he urged immediate attention to Local Government in all its branches; he wanted Free Education, and he said, by the way, it was to be secured by Parliamentary grant without destroying the denominational schools. At the same time he was questioned by a constituent, and in answer he said that he was in favour of disestablishing the English Church, and he was against Home Rule for Ireland.

*MR. STANSFELD: The statement of my right hon. Friend—I know not from what source he takes it—is absolutely incorrect.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I accept the statement. I told my right hon. Friend the source from which I derived it, but I am perfectly unable to attempt to verify it, and after his contradiction I should not think it necessary to do so. However, this is my point. At the time of which I am speaking my right hon. Friend had a programme of what I call practical and material reform. Well, of that programme only a very small portion has been dealt with up to the present time. Take Local Government, for instance. We have made a great advance, but my right hon. Friend will agree with me that perhaps, after all, the most important part of all still remains to be accomplished, namely, that part of it which would bring local government still more close to the people by the creation of District Councils. Very well; but then I ask my right hon. Friend is he, under these circumstances, willing to interrupt the work on which we are engaged, and prevent the possibility of its being dealt with by this Parliament, in order once more to raise this question of constitutional reform? I say distinctly that, as far as I am concerned, I think the time has not yet come for a new Reform Bill, and that what we have to do is to make the best of the old one. I believe that we have, as I said before, no mandate whatever from the constituencies to deal with this question. There has been no agitation; it cannot be pretended that there has been any popular agitation upon the subject. I am convinced, if you could poll the country to-morrow, you would find an immense majority in favour of going on with what I call social legislation rather than dealing any more with constitutional questions.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): Give us the chance.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: You will have the chance soon enough. Do not be afraid, and when the time comes to give you the chance for which you pretend to be so eager, remember the people will ask you what you are going to do if they give you their votes, and what will you tell them? You will tell them, "In the first place, there is the eternal question of Home Rule; to that we stand pledged to our Irish allies; our faith and our honour are pledged, and that must be the first part of our programme." Then you will have to say, "In the second place, and when we have satisfactorily dealt with Home Rule to the satisfaction of those Irish allies—those who are our allies and those who were our allies—we have then to come to the second item of our programme, and that is 'One man one vote,'" and it is not until you have accomplished that that my hon. Friends from Wales can hope to have a crumb from these rich men's tables. It is not until after you have accomplished these two great constitutional reforms, until you have taken the whole Constitution to pieces and created a new Government for England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales—it is not till then that the agricultural labourers or the artisans of this country can look for one ha'porth of bread with all the quantity of constitutional sack. That, however, is a digression which was provoked by the intervention of my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby. It was only meant to show him that I do not think his chance is quite so good as he anticipates. But in sitting down let me repeat that, in my opinion, the time has not come for this reform, still less has it come for such a paltry reform as that which is suggested in the Resolution. Do you think that "one man one vote" is going to arouse any popular enthusiasm? Just contrast it with the previous agitations for reform. When Mr. Bright went up and down the country he had behind him the whole influence of the artisan class, who at that time were almost unrepresented, and when his views were accepted by the House more than 1,000,000 of new voters were added to the electoral roll. And when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton at a later period asked for a further extension of the suffrage he was pleading on behalf of the agricultural labourers, who were then practically without representation; and when his view in turn became the accepted view of the House of Commons, then 3,000,000 of voters enjoyed for the first time the franchise. Yes, those were things worth fighting for. Those were things for which it was worth while to put aside practical reforms, and to accept the necessary delay which ensues upon these great political controversies. But that is not the case with such a question as "one man one vote." It is not worth while, following the right hon. Gentleman, to put aside these much more interesting and much more practical questions in order to obtain an alteration in our constitutional system which, after all, at the outside will have no substantial effect upon the relative position of parties, and which, while it takes a little from a few, confers absolutely nothing upon the great majority of the population. When my right hon. Friend is prepared to undertake the larger question, when he can get a mandate from the country once more to call attention to this subject, when we find ourselves required to complete the work of Mr. Bright and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton, then I hope I shall be permitted to join in his efforts; but I am not at all prepared to intermit all the work of the Session, and all the work of this Parliament, in order to secure a result which I do not think is worth the labour which would be given to it.

(7.14.) SIR E. GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): I do not think the argument of the right hon. Gentleman was consistent or showed that he had a strong case behind it. The first part of the speech was devoted to showing that the subject of the Resolution was so grave and so serious that even the Government with its large majority could not afford the time to deal with it; while the second part he devoted to explaining how very small and infinitesimal the question is. The course pursued by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham in respect to the Motion was a very remarkable one, and not a few of the conclusions he drew as reasons for opposing it must have been very inconvenient to hon. Members opposite. The right hon. Gentleman is in favour of manhood suffrage, of equal electoral districts, and of the payment of Members, and yet so insignificant is this Motion, which involves a great principle of justice to the people, that he cannot even bestow upon it his support. He said it was dangerous to make promises that a Government were not prepared immediately to perform. Well, I venture to say that this Government have made such promises when they were not prepared for immediate action, and we have the everlasting example of the promise of local government to Ireland. When this Resolution was put on the Paper it appeared to be so reasonable that hon. Members opposite would not oppose it, but since then we have seen them engaged day by day in the construction of ambushes in order that their real intentions in opposing the Resolution should not be disclosed. Whenever it is proposed to deal with the franchise three objections are sure to be raised on the other side of the House—that there is something in the condition of Ireland which renders it impossible to do so, that if anything is done there must be a great redistribution of seats, and that the proposal is exceedingly inopportune. Now, it is somewhat strange to hear from the other side of the House that Ireland blocks the way, and it is refreshing to hear from the hon. Member for Salford that, notwithstanding the paternal and beneficent government of the present Chief Secretary, Ireland is yet in such a state of restlessness that something must be done for that unfortunate country before such an elementary injustice as this can be remedied. On this side of the House we have a plan for dealing with the grievances of Ireland and are ready to apply it; if hon. Members opposite have a plan for dealing with Irish representation and with the Irish question, why do they not bring it forward and clear the way? There is nothing in this Motion to prevent their doing so. The question of redistribution has been dealt with in the Debate. The Amendment itself proposes that in any scheme of redistribution representation shall be based on population, and the Motion of the right hon. Member for Halifax is on the same principle. Both are in the interest of numerical majorities. As to the Motion being inopportune, the hon. Member for Salford regards it as such because, though there are certain anomalies in the Bill of 1884, a great change has taken place in the balance of power since that measure was passed. Does the hon. Member wish us to understand that that change in the balance of power is due to existing anomalies? But if the Motion is inopportune—if we are wrong in bringing it forward at the present time, because the question was settled six years ago, all I can say is that we are in very good company. Two years ago the Marquess of Salisbury advocated the extension of the franchise to women—a change far more complicated, far more disturbing, and far more novel than that proposed by the Motion before the House; and when the hon. Member for Salford talks about it being unstatesmanlike for one of the high contracting parties to the settlement of the franchise, or redistribution in 1885, to propose a re-settlement of the question now, he surely must have forgotten this proposal of a far greater change by the Marquess of Salisbury only two years ago. But I contend that the Bill of 1884 was not put forward as a settlement or as a complete measure, but merely as the best measure that was possible in the circumstances, and I fail to see how it is possible to reasonably or logically regard the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member Halifax as any other than an effort to complete the work of 1884. The intention of the Bill of 1884 was to give every householder a vote; this Motion is proposed to make it easy for him to get that vote. The existing system may be made to operate very unfairly in certain circumstances, and in a way altogether contrary to the spirit and intention of the measure of 1885. Hon. Members opposite appear to be resolved to defend the plural vote, although at the same time they admit that it is not worth defending. Just consider how the present system operates. There was a by-election in North Bucks some time ago, and it was supposed that the balance of Parties was very close. Almost on the day of election there was published in the *Times* a leading article appealing to the 600 out-voters in the division to do their duty, as with them rested the result of the election. What effect would that article have upon the resident electors, and especially upon the agricultural labourers? The latter always had great difficulty in recording their votes; it might be necessary for them to walk miles after a hard day's work in order to vote; they might have had considerable difficulty in securing a suitable candidate, and yet, when they were on the eve of success, their hopes were to be annihilated and destroyed by the action of 600 voters who did not reside in the locality, and possibly had no idea of the qualifications of either of the candidates. The maintenance of the comparatively small anomalies and injustices involved in the present system does more than anything else, in these days of opposition to privilege, to set class against class. I agree with the hon. Member for Salford when he says that there is something more in the opposition to this Motion than appears in the Amendment. The hon. Member says the Motion will open a door through which the landscape presented to view will not be so pleasant as some of us suppose. I only wish the door were opened, for I can assure the hon. Member that I should appreciate the prospect disclosed very much more than the hon. Member would naturally be likely to do. The time has now come when, so far from seeking by little side winds to give property a casting vote, or a special privilege, we may say that property can take very good care of itself. Who can look round this House and say that property is not rather over than under represented? I go as far as to say that any man of wealth and position, whether in country or in town, if he is not deaf to all the calls of responsibility and blind to all his opportunities, must have behind him a number of people in a humbler rank of life who, actuated by perfectly proper feelings, will take the guidance and advice of their more fortunate neighbour when they go to the poll. It is quite right that it should be so; and if a man in such a position is not thus looked up to, it shows that he is so deficient either in private character or public spirit that he hardly deserves his one vote. It used to be said that those who were not possessed of any property were an ignorant class and were wanting in intelligence, but that has passed away now that we have compulsory education; and we have seen the effect which the spread of education has had in educating the Government itself. The Local Government Acts for England and Scotland, the Allotments Bill, and the promise of free education are all due to this educational process. It used to be said by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that we ought to be very careful in transferring power to the wage-earning class, because that class did not know political economy. But the Government have now been so far educated that it is making political economy itself the subject of inquiry by Royal Commissions and Committees; and it seems to be their object, under the tutelage of the electors, to unlearn that very science which they once reproached the electors with ignorance of. It is not want of education or property that prevents people from getting outside the class point of view, which is not the monopoly of any one class. Those of us who in political life have been brought closely into contact with large bodies of the electors at public meetings, and who are fair-minded men, will, I think, recognise that if anywhere there is unselfishness and the power of putting the interests of one's own class on one side, that power is to be found even more among the wage-earning classes than any other. If this be not so, how does it come that an hon. Member the other day made a strong protest that the so-called working men Members in this House were not the only representatives of labour? I think that in this respect only too little reciprocity is shown in the choice of working men candidates. But it is said that the man who owns property has such a stake in the country that he ought to have more votes. I do not agree with that. The man who owns property may lose more. Yes; but he can afford to lose more than the poor man can. For example, the question of living under sanitary conditions is far more important to the poor man than to the rich. If the rich man falls ill he is able to get the best food and advice and complete change of climate and scene, while the poor man, helpless in this respect, is obliged to remain in his cottage in a sordid squalor which drags him lower and lower. If a bad use is made of votes, and a Government is placed in power which does something that damages the material prosperity of the country, the rich man risks the loss of some comforts without which life would still be enjoyable, but the poor man loses what are necessities of life. We are now approaching great issues connected with the labour question, which have been put forward by the Government. If the House is to deal with these questions at all, if it is to be of any use in preventing further disputes, it is necessary that it should possess the full confidence of the country. Does it possess that confidence at present? If it does, why not remove this anomaly, which is irritating and useless? If it does not, then it is high time that we should consider what further can be done. I know there are many constituencies, in which there are large masses of working men, where there is much apathy with regard to politics, because they say that elections are not free, and the choice of candidates is so limited that it is not worth their while to go to the poll at all. You can only remove this apathy by manhood suffrage, payment of Members, and perfect freedom of election. These three things, if they were in the Resolution, I should be prepared to advocate most strongly. That being so, it makes it more incumbent on me that I should show no sympathy for, and that I should not contribute to, the stream of objections this Motion has drawn from the other side of the House. The Government are approaching this question of the franchise in a spirit which shows they would rather risk the keeping of hundreds of properly qualified persons off the register than allow one improperly qualified person to have a vote. They propose to pay some attention to labour questions. I am willing to give them credit for good intentions in the discussion of the question they propose to take in hand; but in proportion as they have good intentions it is unfortunate that they should again give a flagrant example of that distrust of popular franchise which has so often led to humiliating defeat at the poll, and will do so again if they continue to display as paltry, as grudging, and as reluctant a spirit as they have done whenever this question of the franchise has come before them.

*(7.40.) Mr. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham): The hon. Member who has just sat down travelled far beyond the issues raised by the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in his opening remarks made it a matter of complaint that this Resolution is opposed by so many Amendments when there is a general agreement that these questions ought to be dealt with. But if the Member for Halifax had simply brought in a Bill to amend and make smooth the working of the machinery for registration, I am quite sure it would not have encountered that kind of opposition with which his Resolution is met on this side of the House. His Resolution is opposed because, while seeking ostensibly to improve the machinery of registration, it affects the principle on which the franchise itself is based, and we have come to the conclusion that if that question was raised at all it is necessary that the whole subject of the franchise should be fairly dealt with. Now, with regard to that part of the Resolution which deals with registration alone, I think we are all agreed that it would be a very good

thing to have the machinery of registration made as easy and cheap as possible; but I do not at all agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax that it would be wise to relax any of the restrictions which are now imposed in order to secure that the voter shall be a substantial citizen, who contributes to the taxation of the country, and has by a period of residence identified himself with the interests of a particular district. But we are told that this question of plural voting is one of principle; and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has asked what claim can be put forward for the retention of this plural vote. In the first place, on this side of the House we contend that the proposal to make an alteration in the franchise is an infringement of the compact made only six years ago by the leaders of the two Parties. To this it is answered that a change has already been proposed by Lord Salisbury, but I would point out that Lord Salisbury has only treated it in public speeches as a matter of discussion: this is the first distinct Parliamentary attempt to alter that compact of six years ago. Our contention is also this: that if we are called upon to remove one anomaly, we call upon the other side to remove other anomalies also. I quite admit that this question of the plural vote is a small matter, but it marks the distinction between household suffrage and that manhood suffrage which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham and others want to see. For my own part, I am not afraid of manhood suffrage, or of its result to the Conservative Party; but if any proposal is to be brought forward, let us discuss it on its merits, and not as we are now doing. I can see that in some instances the doing away with the plural vote may do a real injustice. Business men settle down to live in the suburbs of London and other large cities, and gradually a community grows round them, shops are opened, churches and chapels are built, and a populous and flourishing district springs up where a few years before hardly a house existed. Is it not an anomaly to say that the owners of the most important houses in such places, who probably pay more rates than all the rest of the community together, who contribute to the support of the institutions in the neighbourhood, are to be deprived of their votes for the district in which they have so strong an interest, while their own servants and the shopkeepers are to have votes? I do not believe that the working classes feel any particular umbrage at this small relic of a system which has for the most part passed away. Possibly it might not be any serious grievance to a man of property if he were debarred from voting in a particular locality, and his vote were made a single one, because it is the influence of his life and character on the people around him which has to be primarily considered. But no case has been made out for depriving such a man of his vote. No doubt there are very serious anomalies in the representation of the different constituencies in England. Some boroughs have been treated with a partiality which is astounding. Take, for instance, the borough of Sheffield, which has five Members, while the two flourishing boroughs of Newcastle and Oldham, with 10,000 more voters than the whole registered electors of Sheffield, have only four Members between them. But the great instance of an anomaly that exists in the present system is undoubtedly to be found in the excessive representation which is enjoyed by Ireland. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian says that it is a very small matter indeed; that England can afford to be generous in dealing with that country. If, however, the doctrine of the right hon. Gentleman that representation should increase according to the distance from the centre of government were to be adopted it would be the strongest argument against Imperial Federation. What amount of representation in such a case should we give to the distant colonies and dependencies in a Federal Council? Not only is Ireland herself, with her diminished population, excessively represented in this House, but it must be borne in mind that a large part of the population which she has lost has emigrated from Ireland and settled in England. There are probably about 2,000,000 Irish people in Great Britain, mainly settled in the great boroughs. They are not treated as aliens, but hospitably received, and they enjoy every privilege with Englishmen and Scotchmen; and they take good care that everyone who is in the smallest degree entitled to vote shall be placed on the register. The existence of these communities of Irish residents in our large boroughs is a serious matter at a time when questions affecting the connection of Ireland with Great Britain are under discussion. On ordinary occasions the action taken by the Irish settlers in this country is, under our system of Party government, calculated to give them the control of a large number of boroughs in this country. There are a considerable number of hon. Members opposite representing English boroughs who would not be in Parliament at all if their election had simply been determined by British voters. They represent really the weight which the Irish vote can carry into the scale of the Radical Party. Occasionally this power has been used on the other side; but the consideration is important as showing how very great is the influence which the Irish now wield, not only in their own country, but throughout the constituencies of Great Britain. It is a fact now that, even as the representation of Ireland goes, without taking into account this extra influence, there is a Member in that country for every 7,400 electors, while in England there is only one Member for every 9,400 electors. Thus, you come to the conclusion that 7½ Irish votes are now equal to 9½ English votes; and as the disparity between the populations of the two countries goes on increasing from day to day, by the time the General Election comes we may be able to say that seven Irish votes will be equal to 10 English votes. That is a grievance which is a very sensible one, especially when backed by the voting of the Irish in English constituencies, and I say it is calculated to prejudice our whole system of Parliamentary Government and to lead to results of a most serious character, because we might actually have a verdict given in favour of Home Rule in this House, determined by the excessive representation of Ireland here, and not really representing the minds of the British electors at all. That is one of the reasons why I, for my own part, have always put into the foreground this anomaly as one that ought very soon to be redressed. I think the time is very opportune, because we are taking a Census this year, and we are also having a Committee to report on the financial arrangements between England and Ireland, and to determine the incidence of taxation in the two countries. In considering what proportion of representation should be given to Ireland, the question of the contributions of the Irish people to the National Exchequer should be taken into account as well as the population of Ireland. If that were done there is no doubt that a very serious and important change would be made in the character of this House, and that it would be impossible for us to be compelled to devote nearly the whole of our time to the discussion of Irish measures, as we have done for a great many years past simply, as I have said, through the influence which a determined minority wields by means of the excessive representative power it holds both in Ireland and Great Britain. I consider that if the old Whig maxim were true that taxation without representation is tyranny, then the converse is also true that representation without taxation is also tyranny, and it is to avoid that state of things that I intend to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend, which declares that the present excessive representation of Ireland in this House should be put an end to. We on this side of the House are anxious that Ireland should enjoy equal rights and privileges with ourselves in all things. We are prepared to give her the utmost amount of Local Government that we can within the limits of the Union, as we have given it already to England and Scotland; but if that is done and Ireland has equal responsibilities and equal opportunities with our own, I say that she ought also to bear an equal share of the burdens of the Empire, and ought to have no more power than Englishmen and Scotchmen have in determining the results of the Debates in this House. (8.0.)

*(8.30.) Mr. G. G. LEVESON-GOWER (Stoke-upon-Trent): The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, in the speech which he delivered earlier in the evening with his usual vigour and acuteness, complained that the Resolution of the right hon. Member for Halifax was of a piecemeal character, and did not definitely and finally settle the question. It has, Sir, been the

experience of most of us that, as a rule, in human affairs, more particularly in politics, finality is a hard thing to obtain. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham mentioned, among other things, that he was anxious to obtain manhood suffrage, the payment of Members, and equal electoral districts. What steps did the right hon. Gentleman take, when he was a distinguished Member of the Cabinet of 1884, to enforce his views that this finality, which he now declares to be necessary, should be brought into the measure to which he was then a consenting party? Did he then take up the position that unless all these various points were included in the measure he would not give it his support? If he had done that, then his position would be stronger than it is at this moment. But now the right hon. Gentleman complains of the absence of finality which he acquiesced in with perfect readiness in 1884. It seems to me that we must take a good thing when we find it. If there is something in itself good to be obtained we ought not to adopt the preposterous position that it should be refused because something else is not attached to it; and with regard to the representation of Ireland, the whole question of that representation will have to be dealt with sooner than gentlemen opposite seem to imagine. We on this side of the House will not cease to press for those reforms because of the difficulty of reaching a total settlement of all electoral difficulties. But while the right hon. Member for West Birmingham gave as his reason for opposing the Motion that it was not final and not complete, it is to be noticed that he did not commit himself to any special hostility to any proposition contained in that Motion. He was not always so reticent, for in a letter which he addresses to the electors of West Hartlepool he, while admitting that the change would be theoretically a just one, committed himself to the remarkable statement that it would make no substantial difference in the representation, and would not contribute one iota to the happiness of the people. I am not prepared to follow the right hon. Gentleman there. I maintain that plural voting has a considerable effect on this House. I should not have ventured to interfere in this Debate had I not an opportunity of being officially connected with a body engaged in the work of registration and organisation of electors; and, as the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian has said, of all the different parts of the United Kingdom, England is most affected by plural voting. In the districts near London the effect is most marked. I will give the House a few instances to show how the resident vote is simply swamped by the system of plural voting. In the Fareham Division of Hants, where the list includes many property owners of Portsmouth, the total electorate is 12,800, and the ownership voters number 4,700. The Member for that division was elected by a majority of only 659 in 1885. In the Lewes Division, which includes property owners from Brighton and Worthing, the total electorate is 10,800, and there are 3,000 property voters. In Middlesex we find that in the Tottenham Division, where the Member was elected in 1885 by 735 out of a total of 13,218 voters, 3,342 are voters who hold the property qualification. I might go on to quote a multitude of these cases, but perhaps the most conspicuous is the case of Wimbledon, where, out of a total of 14,000 voters, as many as 6,700 are ownership voters. The result of that is, the whole of the political vitality of the district has disappeared, and it is impossible for either side to rouse any interest in political questions. Surely such a state of affairs cannot be regarded with satisfaction. I now come to the second point in the Resolution of my right hon. Friend—that a shorter qualification should be admissible for the voter to get upon the register. There is a general agreement that the registration system should be altered. I therefore need not dwell upon that at any length. I may, however, just mention a case which came to my knowledge the other day, where a man was kept off the register from 1888 until 1891. He took possession of his house in September, 1888, and did not get on the register till January, 1891, so that if an election does not take place soon it will be three and a half years before he is able to use his vote. If this Motion is carried, as I trust it may be, I would venture to suggest that there should be a supplementary registration in July. Then we come to the third point—as to the superintendence of the registration by a fixed official superintendent with a personal responsibility that every voter who has a right to be on the list is on it. I think it was Sterne who, comparing different institutions in England and France, said they manage these things better in France. That certainly is the case with regard to electoral registration. In France, I am told, they have a permanent official, whose duty it is to find out when a voter is qualified by three months' residence, and then to see that at the expiration of the three months his name is at once placed on the register; so that if a man enters a house on February 15, he becomes entitled to vote on May 16. I was very much struck by the attitude taken up by the hon. Member for Salford. He had the courage to say that he was opposed to the abolition of the property vote. If he had taken a course which his language would seem to justify and insisted in his Amendment on the retention of the property vote, the issue would have been far more clear and intelligible. But instead of that he has attacked my right hon. Friend's Resolution by a flank movement. It occurs to me that the Amendment has been devised to secure an honourable retreat for some hon. Gentlemen who sit on the Opposition side, in order that those gentlemen may give some appearance of reason for voting against the Resolution. Some of the remarks with which the hon. Member favoured the House as to the necessity of considering the position and standard of education as grounds upon which the franchise should be granted, seemed to be echoes of speeches delivered in favour of Mr. Disraeli's Bill in 1867, with all its well known fancy franchises. I could hardly imagine the hon. Member was seriously suggesting such a thing to-day. I believe Her Majesty's Government are going to support this Amendment. I wish to point out to the Government, however, that in assenting to the Amendment they will be binding themselves to the assertion of the principle that it is desirable to amend the present system of registration; and, if that Amendment is carried, they will be expected to bring forward a measure of reform which will meet with universal acceptance. I suspect the real truth is that the Unionist Party cannot afford to let go the one chief prop which keeps them in power—the plural vote. And when one sees these plural voters perambulating the country north, south, east, and west in order to vote down the resident voters, it looks like the manœuvring of a stage army appearing and disappearing, in order to give an impression of magnitude. In the same way as Napoleon refused to risk his Old Guard except at decisive junctures, so Her Majesty's Ministers cling with desperate hope to the one body of opinion on which they think they can rely in all circumstances. I shall support the Amendment of my right hon. Friend; and though we may not carry it, the Division List will show the people who are the real friends of electoral reform and progress.

Mr. G. G. Leveson-Gower

*(8.53.) MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): It does not appear to me that the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has established his position; but he has only failed where the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has failed, and the Mover of the Resolution. I hold that the Motion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax has been answered by the Amendment proposed on this side of the House, and I concur generally with the remarks made in support of it by the hon. Member for Salford, who condemned the Resolution rather by reason of what it omitted than for what it contained. In my short political career I have endeavoured to keep one eye upon principle and the other eye upon the people, and I have felt that so long as I was true to principle, though people might not always agree with me, I should still deserve respect. As far as I am able to judge of the feelings and wants of the people, there is very little of what they are supposed to demand contained in the proposal before the House. What the people required—that is to say, those who call themselves "the progressive and Radical" Party—is summed up under these heads: Universal Suffrage, Triennial Parliaments, Payment of Members, and Equal Electoral Districts. If I were disposed to ingratiate myself with this section of the people, this would be my programme: I should not be content with merely trying to get rid of the plural vote. It appears to me hon.

Gentlemen opposite have only succeeded in one thing to-night, and that is in showing there is a Radical mote grievance and a Unionist beam grievance. Therefore, I say that, from the point of view of the so-called progressive and Radical people, the reform proposed by the Resolution is a wretched affair, and altogether too small for their ideas. Last night we had an interesting speech from the hon. Member for Kilkenny, whom we are glad again to see in this House, although we may be sorry he has gone away from his old principles. Now he only represents 1,792 voters, while I represent close on 10,000. We absolutely refuse to allow the question of reform to be re-opened. We are blamed for refusing to allow this question to be re-opened, but our refusal is due to the fact that we believe our paramount duty to be the maintenance of the interests of the country, with the constitutional machinery we now possess, and we are not prepared, like some people, to throw overboard another plank of the Constitution whenever the opportunity seems favourable for catching a new vote. Hon. Members opposite complain of the working of the present system. May I remind them of the old saying, "That bad workmen quarrel with their tools." As to the proposal on the Paper to admit women suffrage, as the less of two evils I would prefer universal suffrage. There is too much ambiguity in the proposal—"one man one vote." Why not say at once that you want to have universal manhood suffrage in lieu of all the different suffrages we now have—the household, the lodger, and the service? I am dead against further lowering of the franchise. My view, as a Conservative, is that we should raise the people by education to the level of the franchise, not lower the franchise to the houseless, the unemployed, and vagrants. However clever a man may be, and however capable by nature, if he has not some property, some household, some lodging, he is not, and ought not to be, entitled to the position of a voter. Now I am obliged to refer to the question of Triennial Parliaments, because the Amendment I have placed on the Paper is closely connected with it. There is a growing desire no doubt to have more frequent Parliaments, but I am glad to think that I have had the honour of sitting in a Parliament which is likely to be a Septennial Parliament. There is every probability that this will be known in history as the Septennial Parliament, but still one with a most successful and honourable career. But if we are going to shorten the period during which Parliament is to sit we must also shorten the time during which elections shall be carried on. At present elections, owing to the length of time they occupy, upset trade and foster ill-feeling and unrest all over the country, and I do not see why we should not adopt the system in vogue in France and America and have all elections on one day. Again, if any attempt is to be made to arrive at finality, payment of Members is one of the questions which will have to be considered. Some years ago the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian started a theory which has much justice in it, although it is not generally accepted on the Government side of the House. The right hon. Gentleman argued that the distant parts of the country should have better representation than those near the centre of Government. I would have no objection to allow Ireland to have one Member for every 8,000 voters, Scotland one Member to every 10,000 voters, and England one Member for every 12,000 voters. But where, I ask, is the justice of having an English constituency consisting sometimes of 14,000 voters, when there is an Irish constituency consisting of 1,792 voters? When the question comes up I am prepared to make some concession to the centrifugal argument. In the same way, on the question of the payment of Members, I feel that Irish Members are at a great disadvantage as compared with English Members, and that Scotch Members are also at a disadvantage, though not at so great a one as the Irish. If £100 a year were considered enough for English Members, I would suggest that £200 should be paid to Scotch Members, and £300 to Irish Members, by way of enabling them to meet the disadvantage it must be to some of them to be so far removed from the centre of Government, but I am opposed to payment except in the shape of a travelling or family removing allowance. In regard to equal electoral districts, it seems to me that if we once establish the idea of equality in political privileges, we must have equal electoral districts. I have only one or two words to say upon the Motion itself. I am at one with the declaration that—

> "It is needful to amend and simplify the laws relating to the qualification and registration of Parliamentary electors."

I feel it is a grievous thing that if a man is properly entitled to a vote he should, by some accident of the machinery of Government, be debarred from the exercise of the privilege. As to the appointment of a register superintendent, I think there would be some difficulty which no legislation could get rid of. At present Political Parties are obliged to employ registration agents because they have no confidence in the present officials, and I am afraid that, as long as human nature is what it is, confidence in registration officials will be lacking. I thank the House for listening to me so patiently, and I hope the result of the Debate will be to recall the minds of the people to the fact that, though there may be occasional small injustices worked by the existence of plural voting, it is nothing as compared with the great injustice which under the present system obtain, when the vote of an Englishman in any of the wealthy centres of population is only worth a seventh part of the vote of an illiterate in Ireland. The Government have performed the unpleasant duty of strengthening the Criminal Law in Ireland, and they are now taking the promised and pleasant measures to complete the social regeneration of the country. We are about to establish a peasant proprietary, and next year we hope to complete the work of Local County Government for Ireland. At this period of our Parliamentary existence, the proposal to interpose in our work a measure which would re-open the whole reform question is one which I, as a consistent supporter of the Government, cannot countenance. I shall support the Amendment in the hope and belief that in adopting it the House will not be placing obstacles in the way of carrying out the programme for which it received a mandate a few years ago, that programme being to consolidate and perfect the Union, and to improve by wise administration, legislation, and practical sympathy the social and material condition of the working millions of a united and English-speaking people.

*(9.12.) SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I feel in some difficulty in reference to this Debate, because I have a good deal of sympathy with many of the opinions that have been expressed from the opposite side of the House. It is a common device for one side to taunt the other side with not going far enough, and I am in hearty sympathy with hon. Members opposite who have discovered a new-fangled zeal for such radical doctrines as the payment of Members and equal electoral districts. I feel that the ideal to which we are seeking to attain would be that which would give us not only the principle of one man one vote, but manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, and payment of Members. But when we have had a Division as to the payment of Members, for instance, I do not remember that the hon. Member (Mr. de Lisle) has been found as a supporter of that proposal. I am, therefore, obliged to receive the hon. Gentleman's expressions of sympathy with such a project, as simply a pious opinion, used for the purposes of debate. I am not astonished that a pious opinion should be uttered by a gentleman who has given us a prescription for losing a constituency. The hon. Gentleman has told us that he keeps one eye on principle and one eye on the people—a performance that must necessarily cause obliquity of vision. I know it is a difficult process for the hon. Member to reconcile his principles with those of the people he represents, because I believe that no Member of the House of Commons within the memory of sitting Members, has received so many votes of want of confidence as the hon. Gentleman.

*MR. DE LISLE: Let me explain. I found that the best way to get a Radical audience to give me a hearing was to let them first of all pass a vote of want of confidence.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER: The explanation of the hon. Member does not make his case better. If that is the only way for him to get an audience in his constituency he is not likely to sit again in the House of Commons—at all events, for the Loughborough Division. Now, the hon. Member for South Salford, in moving his Amendment, said his chief objection to the proposals of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax, was that they opened up the whole question of reform. But it was quite evident from his remarks in regard to reform, that the hon. Member was criticising not so much the last Amendment of the franchise as the Redistribution Act, which everyone knows was a matter of compromise, and like most matters of compromise, produced very unsatisfactory results in many cases. We should be very glad to have that Redistribution Act amended, for there are a great many constituencies in England which ought not to have the amount of representation that they at present enjoy, and there are teeming centres of population—great towns like Cardiff—which have much less representation than they ought to have, and will have one of these days. But while the hon. Member for South Salford told us we did not go far enough, and that this proposal opened up the whole question of reform, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, on the other hand, told us that this was a paltry proposal with reference to the franchise. The hon. Member for South Salford referred to anomalies. The Opposition are anxious to remove all anomalies, and they think they can remove them one by one as it becomes possible to do so. The principle of one man one vote is a practical principle, and one to which effect can be given without doing any harm or making any great alteration in the present distribution of political power. Some hon. Members have referred to the question as one that is not exciting much interest. I can quite understand that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, who represents a constituency in which the principle is practically non-existent, does not recognise the acute sense of injustice which prevails in many county constituencies. If the right hon. Gentleman were to go down to many county constituencies, he would find, that one of the great grievances of the agricultural voters, is that when the polling day arrives they are outvoted by men non-resident in the division. I believe it would add greatly to the cohesion of all classes of society, if this standing injustice were removed, as it would be if the proposal of the right hon. Member for Halifax were adopted. This brings me to refer for a moment to the question of registration. We want the system of registration carried out by a public official instead of by those who often allow political bias to influence them in their work. The register should be made as easy to get upon as the rate-book. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) says that if such a reform were carried out we might have constituencies flooded. I would point out that it is very seldom that a residence of only three months would be needed. There would be great difficulty in calculating how many additional voters would be required to turn an election, and the expense of bringing any number into a constituency would, I think, make any attempt to tamper with the representation of a district an absolute impossibility. Such things as the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chamberlain) suggests might be possible with the black citizens of the United States, but I do not think it could be done in any constituency in this country. We need a complete remodelling of the system by which voters' lists are at present compiled. We want the system to be above suspicion, and to work automatically, so that every one who has a right to be on the register shall be placed there without any trouble to himself. It has been said by Gentlemen opposite that we are acting in the interests of a Party; we are acting in the interests of the whole voice of the nation. We want the whole voice of the nation, as represented by every man who is properly qualified, to find expression whenever a General Election takes place. To whichever side of the House this would be an advantage it is a matter of justice to individual voters; and on this account we claim this reasonable reform. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham said he was in favour of manhood suffrage and equal electoral districts, but he has not given us much help in the direction of obtaining them by calling this more moderate reform a paltry reform, and bidding us make the best of the Reform Act now in force. It was not his wont in former days to bid any class of people labouring under an injustice to sit still and make the best of it. On the contrary, no man ever spoke more strongly in the country in favour of active agitation for the removal of injustice; and I regret that we should to-day have heard his voice raised against a just system of registration, which would add to the voting power, remove a sense of injustice, and increase the content, and therefore the strength of the country.

*(9.25.) MR. HENEAGE (Great Grimsby): I should like to recall the fact that I have for a long time taken great interest in registration questions, and I much regret that in 1885 the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. W. E. Gladstone) did not see his way to deal with the question of registration and shorten the term of residence. I must remind the House that, although that was the case, the Government then gave a very strong pledge that on the first opportunity they would endeavour to deal with the whole question of registration, and in the Mid Lothian programme of my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian the question of registration was put in the forefront as one of the four questions that were ripe for legislation. I believe that every person who is duly qualified to be a voter is entitled to be placed on the register and to vote, and no person ought to be asked to place himself under any obligation to Party election agents—for the registration agents of the present day are nothing more or less than election agents—and, so far from endeavouring to add to the list of voters, they spend most of their time in trying to keep off the register those who will not vote in accordance with their wishes. I have long been of opinion that there should be some official person—whether a parish officer, or an officer of the County Council, or a Government officer — whose duty it should be to see that every person who is duly qualified is placed on the register. I think that as long as election agents are allowed to act as registration agents under present conditions the Corrupt Practices Act will be an absolute nullity, and I should like to see all their expenses included within the election accounts. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Member for Halifax that the period of residence ought to be shortened, for at present it practically requires an 18 months' residence to qualify. Whether three months would be sufficient is a point of detail upon which I am not prepared to express a decided opinion. I am inclined to think it rather too short, and I should like the law to be so altered that there should be one clear year's residence before a man is entitled to vote. It is impossible, without having a complete Bill before us, to say from what time of the year the qualifying period ought to date from. On one question there cannot be the slightest doubt that attention is required —the injustice that arises in connection with successive occupation, especially among artisans and farm labourers. A man is allowed to count successive occupation in two dwellings, supposing he moves from one part of a constituency to another. But if he removes but just over the border line to a neighbouring constituency his successive occupation is altogether lost. I maintain that the right of a man to vote is his own qualification. If he has been in residence for a year and is on the register then he is duly qualified, and ought not to forfeit that qualification by going into another constituency, simply because he has crossed the border line of a borough or parish. In rural constituencies this inconvenience often arises, as it also does among artisans by their moving from one town to another. I agree in the proposal put forward by the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. De Lisle) that it would be a good thing for the country if elections were held on or about the same day. I say on or about because I do not believe that all elections could be held on the same day, in consequence of the difficulty of finding competent persons to act as returning officers and clerks in the country. In boroughs the difficulty does not arise because you have men from year to year continually engaged in conducting municipal and other elections. No doubt in time a like experience will be available in the counties. I would suggest that at a dissolution a Royal Proclamation should be issued naming a day on which the nominations for boroughs should take place, and a day for the elections; and also days for county nominations and elections. Supposing that the Proclamation were issued on a Saturday morning,

borough nominations might take place on the following Tuesday, and county nominations on the following Wednesday or Thursday, the borough elections on the Friday, and the county elections on the following Tuesday. Thus within 10 days after the receipt of the Writs every election would have taken place, and business would have resumed its ordinary course. There is another reason for holding the elections about the same time, and thus getting at the real opinion of the country. No one who has been engaged in elections, as I have been for some 25 years past, can have failed to notice that the result of the first two or three days' elections have an effect on the elections immediately following. After a time the electors seem to recover their equilibrium, if I may say so, and vote in their elections more or less upon the events of the questions presented to them, but certainly in the first few days the effect of the early results is remarkable—electors apparently being influenced by the desire to be "in the swim" with what seems to be the majority. By concurrent elections a more general reflex of public opinion is likely to be obtained. But this suggestion of the hon. Member for Leicestershire only shows how questions come up for consideration in reference to a reform of our electoral system that are not embodied in this Resolution. On the subject of plural voting much has been said, but I think it has been treated rather too much from the point of view of a certain number of landlords and rich people being deprived of plural votes. So far as I am concerned I do not care if they are deprived of all votes over one. In that matter I agree with the hon. Baronet the Member for Northumberland. If a man holds a high, respected position in a county he can make his influence felt among voters by justifiable means, by advice and example, but he is not entitled to more votes than his neighbour. If this were merely a question of the voting power of wealthy landlords I should not hesitate for a moment. I cannot see why a landowner having property in three counties should have three votes, while another landlord having the same amount of property in one county should have one vote; or, that a wealthy merchant having business premises in one constituency and his residence in another should have two votes, while another merchant having premises and residence together in one constituency should have but one vote. If the Motion before the House would only affect wealthy people I should say nothing against it, but it would, if carried into law, really disfranchise many small freeholders who have bought land out of their savings. I know there are many hundreds of such cases in my own constituency. I know that there are small freeholders of the fishermen and artisan class who have acquired small plots of land out of their savings just outside the borough, and they, no doubt, had in view when making these investments the acquisition of a vote for county purposes. All these will be absolutely disfranchised by carrying such a proposal. Of course, if the proposal is part of a large scheme, these with others must suffer individual loss for the public good. I merely mention this to indicate that it will not be only among the wealthy landowners that votes will be lost, but it will tell also among small freeholders.

*SIR WALTER FOSTER: But they will have their votes for the borough.

*MR. HENEAGE: Yes, I am quite aware of that. I only mean to show that this is not only the case of the wealthy classes we have to take into consideration. We have been asked to vote for the principle of "one man one vote." That is a phrase. I have given reasons why I think this question should be thoroughly considered, and presented in the form of a Bill, and upon the principle expressed under the phrase "one man one vote" I keep an open mind, and am not prepared to give an opinion either way until I see the Bill. In taking that course I am following the example of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1885. He said the Bill was not before the House and he would not discuss it. Indeed, I think since then he has taken up a similar attitude in relation to the eight hours movement. I am, therefore, in good company in taking this course. I shall on this occasion support the Amendment, and though hon. Members have described that Amendment as unfair and evasive I am quite willing to acknowledge that I have had a hand in that

Amendment. But I beg to remind hon. Members also that I know something of the Local Taxation Amendment of 1883. At present I think that the adoption of the principle of "one man one vote" can only be justified if every man is given an absolutely equal voting power, and that cannot be given unless we establish equal electoral districts. I shall vote for the Amendment now, but keeping a perfectly open and free mind when the principle is put before us in a Bill.

*(9.42.) COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): There can be no doubt that the Law of Registration requires simplifying and amending, for there are many anomalies the chief of which have not, I think, been mentioned by those who support this Bill. For instance, whereas the signature of a lodger is accepted as *primâ facie* evidence in support of his claim, a householder is required to give personal attendance to support his claim. On principle I admit it is quite right that a person moving from one borough to another should continue to have a vote if his qualification has once been established. I suppose difficulty would arise as to identification, but I think a certificate from the rate collector, or overseer, or some proper authority ought to be enough to secure the franchise by succession for an elector in his new home. With a three months' qualification I cannot agree, because I look upon the rate book as the foundation of the electoral list of occupiers, and many of the rates in the Metropolis and other parts of the country are collected only every six months. I think it is an advantage to have the voter's name once on the rate book as having paid one rate before he is placed on the Register as a voter. If hon. Members hold that the occupier only ought to be the owner of the vote, and that freehold and other franchises ought to be destroyed, I do not agree with them. In my opinion, persons not otherwise qualified who pay Income Tax or who are members of benefit societies and thus give proof of their thrift, and freeholders should have a vote whether they are occupiers or not. The more competent people we can get on the list of voters the better, and I believe that the "fancy franchises," as they are called, exercise a very beneficial influence on the electorate by giving persons thoroughly qualified a vote, and an interest in exercising it. I cannot vote for the Resolution of the right hon. Member for Halifax in its entirety. I quite agree with those who hold that the law requires amendment as to registration, but I do not admit that persons should vote only for one district. I do not see why I should not have a vote for my office in the Strand and also for my house in the country, since I pay taxes and rates for both. If there is any reliance in the axiom that representation should accompany taxation, I see every reason why a man paying double for a double qualification should have two votes. I do not, of course, mean that mere rentcharges should give votes. I do not encourage the manufacture of votes by the property qualification, but I say there can be no solid objection to a man who has a place of business in the city rated at £5,000 having a vote in respect to that and another vote for his residence at, say, Tulse Hill. In a recent Debate upon another branch of the subject I notice it was stated that the constituency of the City of London is diluted by bankers and merchants. But these are the men who have created the wealth of the community, and, therefore, they ought to have a considerable share in the choice of its representatives. Proportional representation or electoral districts may be a very nice theory, but the calculations on the subject are entirely disconcerted by the fluctuation of the population, especially in suburban districts. I consider that if we had electoral districts we should have to break up communities for the purpose of getting a regular number of voters according to a certain proportion of representation. If, for instance, one constituency consists of 12,000 voters and another of only 2,000, the Member who represents the former, I suggest, ought to be counted as 12 on a Division, and the Member who represents the 2,000 ought to be counted as two. In that way we should avoid altering the areas. Of course, in Committees, the Member should not have any such power, but on a Division in the House it would be easy for the clerk to have some mechanical arrangement or machine to record without any waste of time the absolute number of thousands repre-

sented by any Member and to give him credit for that number.

(9.57.) MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): The hon. Member's idea is an interesting and amusing one, but I think novelty is its only recommendation. Our object has been to shorten as much as possible the time of the House occupied in Division, but I am afraid the plan suggested would considerably lengthen the time. There was one feature about the speech of the hon. and gallant Gentleman I recognised, and that was the frank manner—and I think he is the first on that side who had done so—the frank manner in which he defended the system of plural voting. He affirms his right to vote for office in the Strand as well as residence in the country, and this is the issue so many Members on the other side of the House have evaded. How does the system work in London? In my own constituency there is a firm of house agents. This firm used to have five members on the register for East Finsbury. I am glad to say we have now reduced the number to four, one being disqualified on the ground of not being within the seven miles limit; but they have this number on the register simply because they are qualified as agents for a wealthy Corporation—the Ecclesiastical Commissioners—and in several other boroughs on the same ground Messrs. Clutton have representation. What justification can there be for this? Votes such as this turn the scale against the votes of responsible citizens. Now let me come to an issue with the hon. and gallant Member for Woolwich. We are not dealing with local rates; we are dealing with the Imperial franchise; and the interests of one citizen should be equal to that of another. The moment you go away from that as the basis of the rights of citizenship you are landed in difficulties. Now there has been an extraordinary want of perception shown by several Members of the meaning of the expression "one man one vote." As helping to an explanation, let me give another illustration from the home county. There is for the Hornsey Division a polling place inside Guildhall. It is a known fact that the election for the Hornsey Division is settled, not in that Division of Middlesex, but in the City of London—three or four miles away.

SIR R. FOWLER (London): No, no.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: Does the hon. Member deny that there is a polling place for the Hornsey Division in the Guildhall?

SIR R. FOWLER: No; I do not deny that, but it is for the convenience of both sides.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: Yes; I admit that, but we know very well that the proportion is 2,500 on one side, and 500 on the other. But I do not care whether it is this side or the other side that have the vote. I deny that any Division should be represented in this way—that instead of the persons who reside in the area having the right to say who shall be returned, it should be settled outside. We are only trying tonight to extend that which has been going on for a long time; we are only trying to enforce the principle which was advocated when the Reform Bill of 1832 was passed, which was advocated again in 1867, and again in 1884, and which will have to be advocated again and again until the franchise is put upon such a basis that it will give us a sound and reliable reflex of the opinion of the people. As to electoral districts, I have not heard any objection from this side of the House to putting them on as fair a basis as you can. We know, for instance, that London is over-represented, and that it should only have one Representative instead of two, and we know that under any system of proportional representation that view would be taken. But I do not wish to go into detail in this matter. We are prepared to carry on the work as it was carried on in 1885; but, as has been pointed out, in 1885 there was a compromise. Many of us would have liked to see the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian go further than he did. He had to satisfy both sides, and to meet the opposition of the House of Lords. He provided in his measure, however, that all boroughs of less than 50,000 inhabitants having two Members should lose one Member, and all with less than 15,000 inhabitants having one Member should lose their Member and be included in a county district. That was an improvement; but no one on this side of the House ever thought that in that way finality had been reached. We are prepared to go further, as, indeed, are some hon. Members on the other side. I think one of the greatest advantages of this Debate has been that hon. Gentlemen opposite have told us what they will go for in course of time. Well, although we should be prepared to go with them in endeavouring to bring about reforms, we must ask them not to shift the issue before the House, seeing that it is a clear and distinct one. Are hon. Members opposite prepared to endorse the policy that the qualification for a vote for Imperial and national purposes shall be that of citizenship, and not any property qualification whatever? That is the question which the country will consider we are fighting for, and it will not allow itself to be deceived by any of the peculiar arguments which have been put before the House in the course of the Debate. As to registration, we have been told that a three months' qualification would lead to the jerrymandering of a constituency; but those of us who are acquainted with the position in which the electors of London are placed are aware that you do not, under the present system, get a fair proportion of the opinion of London represented at any election. London is differently situated to other large towns. Instead of being one borough it is divided into several portions, and the result to an elector is that when he removes from one division to another he has to go through a probationary period of from 18 months to 2½ years before he can get on the register. There is a large portion of the population of London who never get on the register at all, and are never able to record a vote. That applies to the householder, but to take the case of the unfortunate lodger where the principle of successive occupation does not apply at all:—If a lodger moves from one house to a house next door, though he may still be in the same electoral district, and in the same parish, he has to go through the probationary period. I have known cases in which men were anxious to record their votes at Parliamentary Elections, when they have taken the trouble year after year to get themselves put on the register, but where, having been obliged to move just prior to a General Election, they have found themselves disqualified. I think we ought to have a definite statement from the Government as to whether or not they endorse the Amendment of the hon. Member for Salford, or whether they propose to bring in a measure of drastic reform of the registration laws at once. If they are so afraid of committing themselves to an abstract Resolution they should be prepared at once to carry out that portion of the Resolution which they endorse, and we shall expect them to Table in the present Session a Registration Bill to effect the object of the Amendment which, with their help, will be adopted by the House this evening. I may be reminded of the words of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, "You are trying to break down the programme of the Session; you have no mandate from the people for this." But I would ask in reply: what mandate had the Government for the Tithes Bill, or the Land Purchase Bill? So far as the latter measure is concerned, not only had they no mandate to pass it but they absolutely had a mandate against the introduction of any system of land purchase for Ireland. We are not misled by this attempt to draw a red herring across the path this evening. We say the issue is clear and distinct, and we are not afraid of our opinions. We say distinctly that one man should have one vote, which does not require any shuffling to understand. We say that we should have a thorough reform of the registration laws and that the whole of the responsibility should be cast on the officer whose duty it should be to carry out the registration and to place on the register the names of persons entitled to be there. We may be told that what we are proposing would involve great expenditure; but if we had returns placed before us showing the official expenditure on registration for municipal and Parliamentary purposes I think it would be found that the authorities already receive money enough to pay all legitimate expenses. In conclusion I would merely say that these are the issues we are going to vote for to-night, and that we shall hold those hon. and right hon. Gentleman opposite who have been so frank in expressing their views to-night to their declarations when these matters are brought from time to time under the consideration of the House.

*(10.15.) SIR R. FOWLER: With regard to the reflections which the hon. Member who has just sat down has cast upon my constituency, I must say I do not think any fair-minded man can feel that a constituency which comprises 32,000 electors is not entitled to send two Members to Parliament. That constituency in the last Parliament returned me as one of their Members by the largest number of votes that ever returned any Member to this House. As regards the immediate question before the House, I have placed an Amendment on the Paper, which, however, I shall obviously not have opportunity to move. What I wish to protest against is that after this House in 1885 went into the question of the representation of the people in Parliament, and discussed the matter at great length, and arrived at a comprehensive measure upon it, only five or six years afterwards we should have the question re-opened. I think we should have a little rest. If we look back at what has happened in the past we shall see that the greatest change made in the representation of the people was that brought about in 1832. No attempt was made to re-open the matter until 1852. I do not say that there were not Motions made by private Members of Parliament, but no attempt was made by a responsible Minister or ex-Minister. From 1852 no attempt was successful until 1866, and the Act of that year was allowed to remain in operation 18 years before the question was again re-opened. I think now it is only fair that this question should be allowed to rest, and certainly should not be re-opened in what is practically the first Parliament after the settlement of 1885. The Home Secretary the other day, in reference to a Debate raised by the hon. Member who has just sat down, said it seemed to him that hon. Gentlemen on the Opposition side who re-opened the question of reform had, no doubt, expected when the Act of 1885 was passed that that Act would place them in power for 20 years to come. That was their opinion, and it certainly was mine. If I could have imagined in 1885 that at this moment I should have been speaking from this side of the House it would have been a great surprise to me. Of course this subject is being re-opened because Gentlemen opposite do not find that the result of the last Reform Act has been what they thought it would be. In the course of the next few years there will be an election. If the Party opposite comes back to this House with a majority, I do not think we shall hear much more about reform. I think that right hon. Gentlemen opposite, when once they are seated on the Bench below me, will be very happy to leave the question alone for six years. Let us have a little rest on this question. Let us be allowed to go on in a course of useful legislation instead of burdening ourselves by re-opening a question which was settled as recently as 1885.

*(10.21.) SIR G. TREVELYAN: I am very sorry that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham is not present, because I wish to answer several of the right hon. Gentleman's challenges. The right hon. Gentleman challenged my right to speak in the Debate at all, quoting in support of the contention a sentence from one of his speeches on the Reform Bill of 1884, namely—

> "No man will be troubled by the franchise again. It admits every man who should be admitted, and it excludes no man who should not be excluded."

But these words do not preclude me from supporting the Motion before the House, because the Motion merely purposes to really bestow the franchise on those on whom the Act of 1884 intended to bestow it. It disfranchises no man, because it is only an equalising Motion, and merely prevents any man from having more than a citizen's right. Consequently, even those who considered the Act of 1884 final have a right to vote for this Motion. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham went on to say that we should do ill to be always changing our Parliament, and that use ought rather to be made of the existing Parliament. Turning to the Welsh Members particularly, the right hon. Gentleman said that what they ought to do was to fit the country with District Councils and abolish the Welsh Church. Here I am obliged to drag in a word of politics in answer to the right hon. Gentleman. What is the use of such a recommendation in the present Parliament? Only the other day an attempt was made to obtain a free system of voting in regard to the Parochial Boards of Scotland, which raised the question of

District Councils, but the effort was defeated; and the Division on the Welsh Church proved that it is perfectly idle to ask for religious equality from the present House of Commons. As to what the right hon. Gentleman has said on abstract Resolutions, I utterly deny that the acceptance of such Resolutions implies any priority of claim for the purpose to which the Resolutions are devoted. It merely implies that a large number of hon. Members regard those objects as highly important. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the manner in which, in old days, Resolutions proceed from the other side of the House, asking for the application of the money of the Treasury to local purposes, had been treated. But what better example could we have of what perseverance in abstract Resolutions will do? However those abstract Resolutions were treated, they were at any rate repeated and persevered in, and they have met with the most complete success. It cannot be denied that millions, far in excess of the most sanguine hopes of those who moved those Resolutions, have been poured into their laps by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman says it is dangerous and dishonest for a Government to make promises which it cannot immediately perform. It is, however, the duty of private Members to make use of the weapons which the power of moving abstract Resolutions of this House has put into their hands, and to say what they consider reasonable, feasible, and just. If they can say this in sufficient numbers they can be quite certain that their wishes will be carried into effect. It is said that the Resolution is out of place because it is subsequent to the Bill of 1884. In January, 1885, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham made a speech to his constituents, in which he said—

> "There is another question. I am in favour of the principle of one man one vote, and I object altogether to the plural representation of property. I will take my own case; I am a terrible example. I have three votes for borough constituencies and the same number for county constituencies. That is to say, I have six votes. I use them on the right side; but I know many of my friends who have 10 or 12 votes, and I have heard of one reverend pluralist who has 23. I consider that this is an anomaly altogether inconsistent with the principle upon which we stand."

Then the right hon. Gentleman enlarged, with admirable wisdom and energy, on the question on which my right hon. Friend has been speaking to-day, and it is to be observed that in the very second sentence of his speech he told his audience that it was made not only subsequently to the Franchise Act of 1884, but within some two months of the passing of that Act. That is the most important question on which it is necessary that we should give one vote, and as to which we do not care at all for the red herring which is being dragged across the scent. It was all very well in the old days, when Franchise Bills were proposed, to say that it was necessary to accompany them with Redistribution Bills. That is what was done in 1866, and multitudes of voters were proposed to be added to the borough franchise; and it was still more plausible in the case of the Reform Bill in 1889, when the county constituencies were quadrupled, because by that quadrupling you brought into the highest belief the gross injustice with which the counties were treated. The only excuse then given for that injustice was that, while the population was large, the electors were few; but when the electorate was enlarged, that electorate was in proportion to the population; and it was absolutely necessary that the representation should absolutely be enlarged also. But that is not the case here. In this instance it is a mere excuse; the right hon. Gentleman does not propose to alter the balance between one constituency and another in the least respect. It is proposed to make certain changes which would be equal over all the constituencies, and it is a mere excuse to say that that should be accompanied by redistribution. Then it is said that the Irish representation ought to be reconsidered and diminished; but the proposal, so far from diminishing the number of Irish voters as compared with England, would very considerably increase it. The proposal would give the vote to a great many people who now lose it through bad registration; for while registration in Scotland is difficult and in England is bad, in Ireland it is an absolutely detestable system. And if you alter the Registration Laws at all, Ireland will gain more than any other part of the Kingdom. And, in the next place, the proposal will diminish the number of property voters; for while in England the number of property voters is very large, in Ireland they are almost non-existent. I have taken several Irish counties and compared them with English counties, and I find that while in Armagh and Berkshire we have the same number of occupying voters, Armagh has only 400 property voters, while Berkshire has 4,000. If you diminish the number of property voters of Berkshire, can that be a reason for taking them from Armagh? Take another case; Cork has 50,000 occupying voters, and Lincolnshire 53,000; but in Cork there are only 394 property voters, while in Lincolnshire there are 18,409. If you diminish largely the number of property voters in Lincolnshire, is that a reason for taking the Members from the County of Cork where there are practically no property voters at all? I think I have said enough on this point. ["Hear, hear," *and laughter from the Ministerial side of the House.*] I do not know why hon. Members should say "Hear, hear," and laugh. The laugh was a little discourteous, because I have been dealing at no great length with a perfectly new point. At any rate, I think I have said enough to prove that any argument drawn from the question of redistribution necessarily accompanying such a change as is now proposed, while unreasonable anywhere else, is absolutely baseless when grounded on a comparison between the effect of this proposition in Ireland and in England. What are the real merits of the question, putting the Amendment aside? Parliament is the great Council of the nation, in which every citizen takes a part in person or by proxy. Among those who attend in person who in his senses would propose to apply the doctrine of plural voting? It is inconceivable that a Member of this House or of the House of Lords should, on account of his wealth, have more votes than another Member or another Peer. What is absurd in the case of Members of the two Houses is equally absurd in the case of those who send them to Parliament. Under the Municipal Corporations Act no elector can vote in more than one ward. The President of the Board of Trade applied that principle to the counties, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will state some real reason why the principle should be rigorously confined to elections for Municipal and County Councils. This plural vote came about in two ways: and one of these matters has been very little touched upon to-night, though I think it is almost the most serious. In 1888 a Return was made of the non-resident occupation voters. It was one of the most culpably deficient Returns ever presented to Parliament, though that was not the fault of the Government. From the Return it appears that in the Exchange Division of Liverpool 1,850 votes were exercised by men who did not live in the division. In another division the number of such voters was 1,636. In North-West Manchester, out of 12,000 occupiers 4,314 were non-resident; while in Central Birmingham there were 1,970, and in Central Bradford 1,981 non-resident voters. With regard to London, I would only correct a statement which I made during the Debate on the livery franchise, when I said there were 7,000 resident occupation voters to 12,000 non-resident voters. The fact is, that there are 4,000 resident occupation voters to 19,000 non-resident voters. But this Return is most defective, because half the great towns of the country are omitted from it, and therefore I say it is sufficient to justify the proposal of my right hon. Friend that in every constituency there should be a responsible official, whose duty it shall be to present these figures, if necessary, to Parliament. That is the case of the boroughs. In the counties the grievance takes a still more serious form. In Cheshire there are 5,400 non-resident voters, of whom more than 1,000 are in one constituency. In a single constituency of Essex 1,484 people vote who are non-resident. In a single division of Durham there are 1,053, and in a single division of Yorkshire there are 1,222 non-resident voters. The grievance, though great here, rises to quite colossal proportions in the counties surrounding London. It is not too much to say that any chance of a healthy resident public opinion on political questions is prevented in the divisions of Middlesex, and in at least one division of Surrey, by men who have not even the excuse of possessing property in those divisions, but whose property is in different portions of the Metropolis, five or six miles away from the divisions where they go to swamp the opinion of the real residents. They do not even take the trouble to go down and swamp that opinion, because in some places they have polling booths, outside the district, at their own doors. And I would ask the House to contrast this with the manner in which the electors, described by the hon. Member for Berwick, have to vote, they frequently having to travel three or four miles; while some of them in the more remote districts have to travel five or six in order to record their votes. What abuses does this system give rise to? As long as a man votes for his own residents no abuse can take place. No man chooses a house to live in for any other purpose than because he wants to live there; but if you allow the vote to be given for property, there is the greatest difficulty in preventing every sort of fraudulent or semi-fraudulent arrangement. So much, then, for the question of the plural vote, and now, in a very few words, I will call attention to the other part of the Resolution, which I say is not a disfranchising Resolution, but enfranchises those whom Parliament intended to endow with a vote. Every man whom Parliament intends to be a voter should be enabled to get that vote without expense or trouble, but the difficulties of the householder in this respect are so great that it is no exaggeration to say that at least 30 per cent. of the citizens of this country are constantly living in a state of disfranchisement. The two divisions of the Tower Hamlets are specimens of other divisions in London. One division of the Tower Hamlets has exactly the same population as Bury in Lancashire; but while in Bury there are 8,000 voters, the division of the Tower Hamlets, represented by the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Ritchie), has on the register only 4,300 or 4,400. Now, the registration in Lancashire is not perfect; but what must it be where they are not 30, but 50 per cent. below the low standard of Lancashire? This evil arises primarily from the long period of residence which is enforced as a qualification, combined with the fact that the Londoner, having often to cross from one part of his constituency to another in search of employment, is often absolutely disfranchised because of his search for work. The third and last proposition of the right hon. Member for Halifax is not the least important—the difficulty and uncertainty of persons getting upon the register at all. First, I will take the question of expense, and all that he asks is that in this matter England may be assimilated to Scotland. In Scotland there is a public officer who lends his services to the Local Government for the purposes of registration. I have been a Scotch Member for 23 years, and during 22 years of that period I have never been called on to pay a halfpenny for registration, nor, so far as I know, has any other Party man in my constituency, for what is properly a public burden. We ask, then, that England may enjoy a similar advantage—that an officer may be appointed in this country charged with making and keeping the register, that he shall be responsible to his official superiors, and that the voter may be relieved of all expense in obtaining his vote. The Overseers who now carry out the work of registration in this country are unfitted by habits and education for the duty, and all this difficulty and expense in getting the vote is but a relic of old days, when men used their votes for corrupt purposes—when, the vote having cost them money to obtain, they used it with a view of getting some recompense for it. But all that is now changed, and the vote is now regarded as a public trust. It is, therefore, the duty of the public to see that it is placed in the hands of the voter without expense, and under the auspices of a responsible public officer. They are points of great importance, and we conceive that every Member of Parliament has a right to put his views before the country on these matters without having his attention directed to an Amendment which, I think, has absolutely no relation to the subject-matter of the Resolution. If ever there was a question on which Parliament ought to vote without reservation, without conditions, and without regard to considerations that have absolutely nothing to do with the main question, it is this, and I hope to-night that the Division will show that the Liberal Party, at all events, has this question deeply at heart.

*(10.54.) Mr. RITCHIE: The course which has been pursued to-night with regard to the Motion before the House is, I think, a very inconvenient one. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax without touching, or, at all

events, after touching only very lightly, on the main proposition in his Motion, sat down, after informing the House that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bridgeton would take up that part of the question and deal with it. Now, to say the least, it is inconvenient that the arguments for the main proposal of the Resolution should not be heard until the close of the evening. And what makes it still more inconvenient on this particular occasion is that the right hon. Gentleman has given the House a considerable number of figures which it is impossible to check in the small portion of time remaining at my disposal. As the right hon. Gentleman was going rapidly through his figures, however, I was able to check them in one instance, and one only; and if we are to judge of the accuracy of the other figures which he gave by the one which I was able to check, I can only say that the House would not be able to form a very high estimate of his general accuracy. The right hon. Gentleman when dealing with the question of the plural vote, and when elaborating his argument with respect to the comparison that had been made in the representation of Ireland and England, told the House that there were in Lincolnshire no fewer than 18,400 plural voters. Now, it so happens that 14,000 of those 18,000 are not plural voters at all.

*SIR G. TREVELYAN : I can only use the Returns that the right hon. Gentleman and the Government have put into my hands. Wherever the question was one of non-residence I carefully used the Non-residence Return. There is no Non-residence Return for Ireland, and I was only able to use the Return in which the plural voters for Ireland and England are described, and I refrained from calling them non-resident purposely.

*MR. RITCHIE ; I am quite aware of that; but I want to point out that 14,000 of the 18,000 are undoubtedly owners as well as occupiers; but they are registered as owners, although they vote as occupiers. The reason why they are registered as owners rather than as occupiers is that they are so registered under the Act of 1885, which enacts that unless a man who is both owner and occupier claims to be put on the register as an occupier, he is put on the list by the Overseer as owner, although he votes as occupier. So far, then, as 14,000 of the 18,400 whom the right hon. Gentleman called plural voters in Lincolnshire are concerned, they are not plural voters at all. I now wish to say a few words with respect to the speeches of the right hon. Member for Halifax and the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian. I am not surprised that the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian spoke of this Motion as a Bill. It is well known that the right hon. Member for Halifax has striven for some years past, and striven in vain, to induce the House to consider a Bill on the subject which he had. I must confess that I have felt some sympathy and commiseration for the right hon. Gentleman when I have seen him balloting year by year in order to seek for his Bill a place which he failed to secure. And I cannot help thinking that if the right hon. Gentleman had been as zealous in urging upon his colleagues in 1885 the extreme importance of this matter he might perhaps have been more successful than he has been. But, unhappily, the right hon. Gentleman was unsuccessful with his colleagues in urging upon them the importance of the question, and equally unsuccessful in regard to the ballot. Why is it that the right hon. Gentleman has been so unsuccessful with his Colleagues? Why is it that they have refrained from dealing with this question, which, as the right hon. Member for West Birmingham said, was one of the questions of the authorised programme? It was, I suspect, because the programme had served its purpose, and because, when the election took place, it was found by the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian that the register was sufficiently good for his purpose and required no further attention from him. Indeed, I often think that the Party opposite seem to consider that the register is invented for one purpose, and one only—to make it easy for them to remain in power. So long as the register effects that object all works smoothly and well; but the moment it ceases to manufacture voters in support of the Party opposite, then there is something wrong in the machinery which requires oiling and attending to. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian made a speech—I think it was in Birmingham—in 1888, and then referred to the plural voter. He also made some very remarkable mistakes in his figures, which I think he has since acknowledged. But whether they were right or wrong, the right hon. Gentleman by some calculation—I do not know how—came to the conclusion that three-fourths of the plural voters voted against him at the General Election, and that was considered by him and his Colleagues as sufficient reason why the ownership vote should at once be taken in hand and reformed before another election. Now, the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax to-night is divided into two distinct parts. One is the question of registration reform. There seems to me to be some confusion as to what constitutes registration reform and what constitutes franchise reform. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax has undoubtedly some extraordinary notions as to what constitutes registration reform. He said that the Reform Bill of 1885 established Household Suffrage without rating qualifications, and then went on to say that the Reform Bill necessarily required this Registration Bill which abolishes the ratepaying qualification of the Bill of 1885.

*Mr. STANSFELD: I referred to the Bill of 1832.

*Mr. RITCHIE: Surely the right hon. Gentleman must have been very hard up for a case if he had to go back to the Bill of 1832, seeing that there was a Bill passed in 1884. I understood him to mean the last Reform Bill. Looking to the fact that the Bill of 1885 enfranchised a larger number of persons than the Bill of 1832, it is clear that the franchise was wider than in 1832. Now the right hon. Gentleman proposes even to abolish the modified restrictions made by the Bill of 1885. I venture to say that a Resolution, which has for its object the abolition of ratepaying occupation, the reduction of the term of occupation, the establishment of successive occupation, and the principle of one man one vote, cannot be called a mere registration reform. If it can, I do not know what is meant by reform of the franchise. Registration reform, in my opinion, means the reform of the machinery of registration by which those persons entitled to the franchise by the Bill of 1885 shall be put upon the register. But the moment you abolish some of the restrictions on the franchise of 1885 it ceases to be registration reform and becomes franchise reform. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian gave an illustration of the necessity of the reform of registration. I do not propose to deny that there is a necessity for a reform of the Registration Laws; in point of fact, I have myself stated it more than once in this House. Then, says the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, "Why do you not correct the grievance at once?"

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: I did not call upon the Government to correct a grievance. I stated that the responsibility of correcting it rested with those who proposed this Resolution.

*Mr. RITCHIE: I thought that the argument of the right hon. Gentleman was this — that if the Government accepted that Resolution it would be their duty to bring in a Bill.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: Nothing of the kind.

*Mr. RITCHIE: Then I apologise to the right hon. Gentleman. Having admitted that there is a necessity for some reform, it may be fairly said, "Why do you not alter the law?" I will tell the right hon. Gentleman. We should have been very glad indeed to have taken in hand the reform of the machinery of the Registration Laws; but we knew that if we touched the question of registration every conceivable Amendment dealing with what the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Halifax has touched upon would have been brought forward. The only qualification the right hon. Gentleman made in his speech was to admit that so far as one man one vote was concerned his proposal entailed more than a mere registration reform. The right hon. Gentleman admits that this is not a registration proposal, but a reform proposal. As far as we are concerned; we admit the necessity for a reform of the registration machinery, we do not admit the necessity for a Reform Bill; we do not think it wise or expedient or in the interests of the people. Now, with regard to the other part of the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman, the most important part is undoubtedly that which deals with the abolition of dual voting. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian seemed to imply that all who could be included under that category were the propertied and wealthy class, and when the suggestion was made that there were some working men probably to be included in it the right hon. Gentleman repudiated that idea with scorn, and said, "Show me where is your working man," and made it clear that, in his opinion, such a thing did not exist. But, as a matter of fact, it is very well known to those who have studied this question that there is a large number of small holders of land, and they probably exceed what may be called the wealthier class under the head of the ownership vote. The right hon. Gentleman knows very well that there are large numbers of the working classes who now, happily for themselves, invest their means in what are called building societies; and I believe that a very large number of the working classes have become owners of property under the operations of those societies. I should like to say one or two words in defence of the principle of these so-called plural votes. The question of representation in the House of Commons has been discussed very much on the lines that the whole of the House of Commons is returned *en bloc*, and the fact that localities are represented in this House seems to have been almost entirely ignored. It is the fact, however, that it is the localities which are represented in this House, and, that being so, surely men who have a substantial interest by reason of ownership in localities have a right to record their vote for the choice of a representative to watch over the interests of the locality in the House of Commons. I can understand that a man may have two votes, one in a town and the other in the country, and he may desire to vote with regard to different interests in each locality. Take the case of a man living in London who has a factory in Essex. Would it not be wrong to deprive him of a vote which he could exercise in order that adequate representation should be obtained for each of the localities in which he is interested? Take the case of a mineowner. Surelya man who is the owner of a mine should have a voice in the election of a Member who is to represent the mining interests of that particular locality? I see nothing incongruous about such an arrangement, and in my opinion it is perfectly defensible. I do not say there are not some abuses in connection with this matter, as there are abuses in connection with other questions; but, so far as the general principle is concerned, I do not think it is open to the objection which has been urged. This question of dual voting is not by any means so large a question as it is represented to be in some quarters. The right hon. Member for Mid Lothian, speaking at Birmingham, gave the number of plural voters as being 586,000 in Great Britain. As a matter of fact, 400,000 are resident owners, and, therefore, have not plural votes, leaving a balance of 186,000 in the whole of Great Britain who have plural votes. Taking the Return of the right hon. Member for Halifax for England and Wales, the number is reduced to 120,000, and as the right hon. Gentleman takes off 45 per cent. of those votes for absentees, the number of so-called plural votes is reduced to 73,000.

*Sir G. TREVELYAN: Non-resident and occupation voters.

*Mr. RITCHIE: Those are comparatively few. That 73,000 has to be considerably reduced by those who, not being also occupiers, have only one vote. The right hon. Gentleman assumes that the great majority of those ownership voters are opposed to him and his Party; but if those ownership voters are equally divided it would be granted that the matter is not very material. You have to assume, before any great grievance is made out, that the great majority of those 73,000 votes are given for one Party, and when you consider the small number and the deductions that ought to be made the matter is seen to be, after all, an exceedingly small grievance on the basis of which to ask the House of Commons to put a stop to all progressive legislation, and to embark on a new Reform Bill. The question of Ireland has been raised this evening. According to voters there is no doubt that Ireland has 21 more Members than it ought to have. If, therefore, you compare the anomaly of plural voting with the anomaly which exists in Ireland the result is that the county voter, in consequence of the plural vote, has 5 per cent. less influence than he would have if it were abolished; whereas the Irish voter has 20 per cent. more influence than he would have if the representation were reduced to the fair proportion between the two countries. The result is that the Party opposite close their eyes to this four-fold grievance in the case of Ireland, and shout loudly about this grievance in the case of the plural voter. They are quite willing to accept all anomalies in their favour, but their indignation is overwhelming with regard to any anomaly by which they think that they themselves suffer. No one can calculate the difference which the period of residence will make in the number of voters. I do not know that it would make a material difference in the number. But one difference it would make would be to introduce into our Registers an element of instability which happily is absent now. Precautions ought to be taken to see that voters have a substantial interest in the locality, and the question we have to decide is whether 12 months' residence is too large, or whether three months is enough to give that stability. I think three months' residence is too little, and the right hon. Member for Birmingham has shown conclusively to what dangers that proposition might lead. With regard to the Bill of 1884, I should like to ask whether this Bill at that time was considered to be only an instalment or a settlement of the question which ought to be considered as lasting for some time. The right hon. Member for Birmingham has quoted a sentence from the speech of the right hon. Member for the Bridgeton Division of Glasgow to show that he, at least, thought it was not an instalment, but a settlement of the question. The right hon. Member for Bridgeton has said that this is quite consistent with his attitude now. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman thinks that the alteration of the period for qualification is not a very important and very considerable alteration of that measure of which he said that, if it were passed, it would prevent our being troubled with the matter again. Surely the right hon. Gentleman believes that the proposal made would add considerably to the number of those who were enfranchised. If it would so add, how can the right hon. Gentleman contend that this proposal is no interference with the franchise? He cannot do anything of the kind. But the right hon. Gentleman was not long in changing his mind on the subject. The right hon. Gentleman stood for some constituency—I think Hawick—in 1885, but at that time we had no dissatisfaction expressed about the question of reform. But by July, 1887, he had found salvation—he had changed his opinion about the Reform Bill, as in regard to other matters. Having expressed unqualified satisfaction with the settlement of 1885, in 1887 he tells the electors of Bridgeton that if they will return him he will make it the business of what remained of his life to see that every citizen householder should have a vote, and that no citizen householder should have more. What I am insisting upon now is that in 1885 he gave no indication that the settlement was not an acceptable one to him; on the contrary, he emphatically expressed his approval of it in unqualified language. Yet in 1887 he tells the electors of Bridgeton he means to devote the remainder of his life to this Reform Bill. The right hon. Gentleman is dissatisfied with this Parliament; he evidently thinks this Parliament is quite useless for all kinds of social legislation, although he has not to-night used language quite so strong as he did on January 22 last. He then told an audience that the clergy had two votes to their one, and that it was plain they would not get justice until all had one vote alike. I maintain that when a politician of the character of the right hon. Gentleman said this to a comparatively uninformed meeting — [" Where ? "]—I think Stockton.

*SIR G. TREVELYAN: It would be fairer to read the whole passage. I named other people besides the clergy—brewers, ground landlords, and others—and showed how difficult it was to approach social questions while these classes had plural votes.

*MR. RITCHIE: I maintain that for the right hon. Gentleman to tell an audience that the clergy had two votes to their one was throwing dust in their eyes. What the right hon. Gentleman meant was that the clergy returned two Members for the University of Oxford and two for that of Cambridge. This is what he called the clergy having two votes to their one.

*SIR G. TREVELYAN: I stated that they voted for their local Members and for the Members for Universities.

*MR. RITCHIE: I am speaking about the balance, the excess the right hon.

Gentleman said the clergy had over the audience. If the right hon. Gentleman had told his audience that the clergy returned four Members to the Universities I should have nothing to say; but he said they had two votes for every one the working men had. The right hon. Gentleman further said that improvements could not be expected from a Parliament where the employers had an average of two votes and the employed only an occasional one. Surely this statement is for all practical purposes directly contrary to the fact. Every working man has as much right to a vote as his employer. I am not talking about the question of the dual vote. The right hon. Gentleman said the working man had an occasional vote, whereas he has as much right to be on the electoral roll if he is rated at £10 as the man living in a house rated at £500. The statement of the right hon. Gentleman was calculated to produce an impression which the facts did not warrant. The right hon. Member for Halifax has admitted that this is not a registration proposal, but a reform proposal.

*MR. STANSFELD: Not exclusively.

*MR. RITCHIE: The right hon. Gentleman calls upon the House to proceed instantly with this Reform Bill of his. And why? Because, he tells us, the next Parliament will have very much larger questions to deal with. That is to say, we are called upon by the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues to get rid of all these difficult questions in order that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues may deal with the larger questions which they have in their mind. The right hon. Gentleman said in effect that it was true that his Party did not deal with this question when they were in power, that they neglected their duty, that they left their obligations unfulfilled, that they are bankrupt debtors, and that they are now calling upon the present Government to take up their dishonoured Bills. But Her Majesty's Government decline to put a stop to the social legislation which they have in hand for the purpose of taking up those dishonoured Bills. No previous Parliament has ever dealt with our social problems to such an extent as the present one has. It has dealt with the sanitary condition of the houses of the working classes, with the question of Local Government, and it proposes to deal with the subject of the extension of the education of the people, as well as with other matters of considerable importance, during the present Session. But if Her Majesty's Government are to take up the programme which the right hon. Gentleman opposite has put forward, they will at once destroy all chance of this beneficial legislation being carried into effect. The Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman is one which Her Majesty's Government are quite unable to accept. We do not say that registration does not require to be dealt with, but we decline to be drawn into legislation of the large and important character which the right hon. Gentleman indicates. We say that nothing has been said to-night as to discontent on the part of the people, or powerlessness on the part of Parliament, to prove that we should undertake a Reform Bill of the magnitude and character which the right hon. Gentleman wishes us to enter upon.

*(11.34.) MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): I hope the House will not be impatient if I trouble them for a few minutes with some remarks upon a branch of the question which has not been referred to in the course of the Debate. I will try as much as possible to abstain from any repetition of what has been said, and put before the House one or two considerations which weigh with me in approaching the question. We have been told that this is not a mere Registration Bill, but a Reform Bill.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): Reform Motion.

*MR. COURTNEY: I am glad of the correction. It is a correction which was made when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was speaking. It is a Reform Motion, an abstract Motion, a Motion to which the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in that respect has the strongest possible objection. The right hon. Gentleman does not pretend that the Government could carry this Session a Bill dealing with the question, but he asks that the Government should assent to the Motion of the right hon. Member for Halifax in order that he, may bring in a Bill. My right hon. Friend forgets that the Member for Halifax has already abandoned a Bill, because it was impossible to pass it accepting this Motion instead of it; and therefore we have to look the fact in the face that this is an abstract Motion which under no circumstances could this Session lead to any practical conclusion. I am not at all satisfied with the condition of registration. I have always looked with the greatest aversion at the proceedings which take place in the Registration Courts. Those Courts are caricatures of our constitutional life, and I should like to see them altogether abolished, and the more sensible process which appears to prevail in Scotland introduced. I also think the term of residence necessary for qualification should be reduced. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) made out that the present difficulty connected with registration sometimes mounted up to three and a half years' deprivation of the vote. He reckoned the time from the moment of qualification to the moment the vote was exercised. If that system of reckoning is to be adopted the right hon. Gentleman has very much understated the case. Suppose a person got on the the register just before the last election, and lives in a constituency where there has been no by-election, he will not have exercised the franchise for a much longer period than three and a half years. I am quite content to have the term of residence reduced; indeed, judging by results, the School Board term of residence seems to be enough; and whilst we are about it we might adopt the School Board qualifications in other respects. Now, I believe the question of the abolition of the dual vote is a matter of comparatively small importance. The figures given by the President of the Local Government Board strongly support that contention. No doubt dual voting might have great effect upon by-elections. It was quite possible that the North Bucks election might have been turned by the introduction of out-voters; but this did not apparently happen, and even in the case of by-elections there are out-voters on each side. I am convinced that at a General Election the influence of the out-voter is very limited indeed. I doubt whether it is worth maintaining, seeing that it is violently opposed to the strongest political sentiment of the day, that of equality; at the same time I will suggest to certain of my hon. Friends whose minds are occupied with the great questions of the hour, an illustration that perhaps will make them pause before they declare that under no circumstances will dual voting be allowed. I do not know whether hon. Members saw a pamphlet circulated quite recently giving an account of a conference between mine owners and the workers in mines on the question of the eight hours' movement. The conference was composed of about an equal number of persons on both sides. That was accepted as a fair basis. So, again, if the dispute had been referred to arbitration, there would have been one arbitrator on each side. Now, if questions of this kind are to be brought in the future, as seems likely, into this House as a great Court of Arbitration, are you going to say that the rule of arbitration, which you allow in private conferences and references, is to be put aside here and mere numbers prevail? Why am I going to vote against the Motion of my right hon. Friend? The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division (Sir G. Trevelyan) thinks the argument for the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for South Salford amounts to this: that if the dual vote is abolished, such a dislocation will be produced in our electoral system that it will be necessary to re-consider the question of the representation of Great Britain and Ireland. But I do not so understand the meaning of the Amendment. I do not think the Amendment involves that or amounts to that. What I understand the Amendment to mean is, "If we are going to take up the great question of reform let us deal with what is one of the most critical and important questions, namely, let us redress the balance of representation between the component parts of the Kingdom." That is the argument. Yet I cannot support the Amendment. I shall vote against the Motion, but I will not vote for the Amendment. The hon. Member who brought forward the Amendment said the great and pressing matter is to redress the balance between Great Britain and Ireland. No doubt that is a great thing, but it was not the greatest thing. There is a much greater and more pressing matter to be attended to if the problem of electoral reform is to be taken up. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division said that in this great inquest of the nation every citizen votes by himself or by his proxy. But is that so? I should like to know where the 1,700 citizens who voted against me at the last election have got their voice? Go through the whole of the electorate of the United Kingdom, and you will find that of those who voted two-fifths are not represented at all in this House. The statement of the right hon. Gentleman is one of the idlest of dreams. The great evil of this House is that it does not represent the people of the country. [*Opposition cheers.*] Hon. Members may cheer that statement as they like, but with the reform which is advocated in the Motion, and which they are going to support, this House will still less represent the people of the country. Reference was recently made to Wales, and it was said that of the Welsh Members 25 were of one Party and 5 of the other, or I think it was intimated 27 and 3. I believe the right hon. Gentleman who made that statement really thought that the people of Wales on the issue then under consideration were divided in the ratio of 9 to 1. I am quite sure many persons think there is a similar division of opinion in Ireland. These are illustrations of the failure of our system to bring about a fair representation of the people. In many constituencies nearly one-half of the electors are not represented at all, as the Member sitting in the House merely represents the majority, which is frequently only a bare majority. However soon after a General Election a decision may be arrived at in the House, it does not necessarily represent the decision of the country. Now, I should like to submit another reflection to hon. Members. The balance of votes in this House depends upon the balance in certain constituencies. Some constituencies always go Conservative and others Liberal, but there are many constituencies in which the strength of Parties is about equally divided, and it is upon the decisions in these constituencies that the character of this House depends. You have provided a system of election which brings home to every elector in such constituencies one question on the issue of which at the moment the election depends. The present machinery makes the Constitution, as it were, top-heavy, and leads to those violent changes which so frequently occur. The result is that you do not get the stability, the fixed conviction, and the reality of judgment of a responsible people. You are in danger of making the decision of the question, which at the time of the election may be uppermost, determine the character of this House for four or five years. That is the gravest difficulty we have to deal with in the constitution of this House, and it is a subject to which you ought to address yourselves when considering the subject of reform. Consider what is the great question on which we are going to be engaged so much in the future. Consider the problems of labour, and consider what kind of judgment you will get from an electorate constituted as I have described when a popular labour cry is made the cry of an election. The hon. Member for Northumberland (Sir E. Grey), in his admirable speech, said most truly that, whatever the electorate, the conditions of leisure and means are such that you will always have men of wealth in this House, and that the sentiments of wealth will be uppermost in this House. They will; but they will be subject to electoral pledges, which will often be opposed to private opinions. It will be very difficult for candidates to keep their independence on such questions. My right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle (Mr. Morley) may, and I hope he will, maintain his independence and keep his seat; but it must be remembered that he is in already. It is one thing' for a man who is in to be able to say unpopular things; it is a very different thing for a man to attempt to get in when he expresses unpopular opinions. I would just refer to a fact which is governing the character of this House at this moment. It is well known that the character of this House as a legislative and deliberative Assembly is in a very different condition from what it would have been but for some events which happened last December. Supposing a General Election had taken place the week after those events, there would have been shown a strong illustration of a particular passing emotion upon the electorate which would possibly have stamped upon this House for four or five years a particular character in consequence of a hasty, though possibly a good, judgment concluded at that moment. Our kinsmen across the Atlantic are aware of the perils of such an electoral system, and the founders of the great American Republic, who did not tumble into the Constitution they created, guarded against it, as has been shown in connection with the recent great turnover there. I am going to vote against the Motion, because I am impatient of such peddling with a great question, and because it appears to me that my right hon. Friend has no conception of the perils and dangers which the House ought to consider. The proposals he makes are not only inadequate, but entirely misleading. I shall not vote if it comes to a Division for the Amendment of the hon. Member opposite, because I believe there are still greater things to be undertaken than that to which he calls the attention of the House. I hope, however, we shall have no vote on the Amendment. I shall try to prevent it by crying out "No;" and as it will be after 12 o'clock, it will be necessary to employ the closure to get a vote upon it. We shall have a similar state of things to that which we had the other night when the Amendment of the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) was attempted to be brought in as a substantive Motion. I hope that some of us will do our best, as was done on that occasion, to prevent any vote being taken on the substantive Motion.

(11.57.) The House divided :—Ayes 189; Noes 291.—(Div. List, No. 71.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): I object.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I object.

*MR. SPEAKER: A mere objection does not hold.

DR. TANNER: I rose to object, following on the lines laid down by the right hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees, who said he objected to the Amendment——

*MR. SPEAKER: Objection is not sufficient; but as the hon. Member is continuing the Debate, it must stand adjourned.

(12.15.) MR. HOWORTH rose in his place, and claimed to move "That the Question be now put."

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is now too late; the Debate is adjourned.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): Are not further proceedings governed by the 12 o'clock Rule against opposed business?

*MR. SPEAKER: An hon. Member rose to object, and I said that a mere objection was not sufficient. Nobody then rose to move the Closure, and the hon. Member for Cork continued his speech, and as there was no indication of a Motion for the Closure, I was obliged to adjourn the Debate. When the Mover of the Amendment moved that the Question be now put, I informed him that he was too late.

The Debate stood adjourned till to-morrow.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES.)

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures: Mr. Boord and Mr. Childers; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Buchanan and Sir Albert Rollit.

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY further reported; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, the following Fifteen Members in respect of the Factories and Workshops Bill, and Factory and Workshops Act (1878) Amendment Bill, namely: Mr. Abraham (Rhondda Valley), Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Mr. J. A. Campbell, Mr. Coddington, Viscount Cranborne, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Fenwick, Sir Henry James, Mr. Matthews, Mr. Oldroyd, Mr. Byron Reed, Mr. T. H. Sidebottom (Stalybridge), Dr. Tanner, and Mr. Stuart Wortley.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 4th March, 1891.

Mr. SPEAKER was in his place soon after 12 o'clock, but it was not until 12.25, and after attention had been called to the fact that there were not 40 Members present, that a quorum was secured.

SEA FISHERIES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Copy ordered—

"Of Statistical Tables and Memorandum relating to the Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom, including Return of the quantity of fish conveyed inland by Railway from each of the principal Ports of England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland during each of the years from 1885 to 1890, inclusive (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 12, of Session 1890)."—(*Sir M. Hicks Beach*).

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 128.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CONVEYANCING AND LAW OF PROPERTY ACT (1881) AMENDMENT BILL.

(No. 5.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*(12.30.) MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill, I may explain that its object is to give additional security to leasehold property. I may remind the House that a lease is a contract granting the occupancy of a property for a definite time on the payment of rent provided that certain covenants and stipulations are performed, and giving the landlord upon non-payment of rent or non-performance of the covenants a right of re-entry and forfeiture of the lease. The right of re-entry is not intended to destroy or to defeat the lease, but is a final resort in case of a persistent and continuous breach of the covenants and the conditions of the lease. The policy of the law has been evinced by decided cases and statutes in which relief has been given against arbitrary and capricious exercise of forfeiture clauses in leases. The law, at first, gave relief in cases of forfeiture for non-payment of rent. The lease prescribes that rent shall be paid at a definite time, and there is a covenant that it shall be paid at that definite time. In the event of non-payment there is an actual breach of covenant and a right of re-entry; but the law provides that the exercise of this right may be restrained, and therefore there is a relief in the event of temporary non-payment of rent. Then relief was given against forfeiture for breach of a covenant to insure. Following that up, an Act of Parliament was passed by Lord Cairns largely extending the relief from forfeiture generally. The section of that Act which my Bill proposes to amend is the 14th. The Act is the Conveyancing and Law of Property Act of 1881, and the 14th section provides that before an action for re-entry, or forfeiture under the stipulations of a lease shall be commenced the landlord shall give notice requiring the covenants of the lease to be performed, and that where the lessor is proceeding by action or otherwise to enforce the right of re-entry or forfeiture the lessee may apply to the Court for relief, and the Court may grant relief on such terms in regard to costs, expenses, damages, compensation, penalty, or otherwise including the granting of an injunction to restrain any like breach in the future as the Court may think fit. That would have given a Court of Law full power to afford relief in all cases for breach of covenant, where the Court thought that the breach of covenant was not of a character to justify the putting an end to the lease. But, for some reason I have not been able to find out, a limitation was put on this just and extensive power given to the Court. By Sub-section 6 of this Section 14 it is enacted that the section shall not extend to a covenant, or condition against assigning, under-letting, parting with possession, or disposing of the land leased; nor shall it extend to a condition of forfeiture on the bankruptcy of the lessee, or a taking in execution of the lessee's interest; nor in the case of a

mining lease shall it affect a covenant or condition allowing the lessor to have access to or inspect the mines, machinery, and workings, or the books and accounts. Consequently, if there is a breach of any of these covenants there is an immediate act of forfeiture which the landlord has an absolute right to take advantage of, and which the lessee has no remedy against, and in which the Courts of Law have no power to give relief. The present Bill proposes to repeal these exceptions and to grant to the Courts of Law full power to give relief in all cases of forfeiture. Section 1 of the Bill simply incorporates the measure with the Conveyancing Act of 1881, and the Amending Act of 1882. Section 2 repeals the exceptions to which I have referred, and it gives the Court full power to relieve in all cases of forfeiture. In regard to mining leases I would prefer to take the judgment of those who are more specially interested in them. As the House is aware I am a Metropolitan Member, and the leasehold interests with which the Metropolis is concerned are those connected with houses. I believe, however, that there is as strong a case for relief from forfeiture in mining leases as in leases of houses. I cannot imagine a more unreasonable thing than that a lease should be forfeited for a temporary refusal to allow an inspection of the mine. I can understand that such a penalty might attach to a persistent refusal, but it is monstrously unjust that a temporary or negligent breach of a covenant to allow inspection should involve the forfeiture of the lease. As to the necessity for an alteration of the law with reference to leasehold property in London, I believe that many cases have occurred within the experience of hon. Members of the House which show the necessity for it. I will only, however, refer to the recent case of "Barrow *v.* Isaacs." In that case Sir Henry Isaacs, the late Lord Mayor of London, was in the possession of large premises in the City, which he held under a lease worth many thousands of pounds. He agreed to let a portion of the premises to some people in the City of equal standing with himself at a substantial rent. He sent instructions to his solicitor to prepare an under lease, but in the absence of the solicitor, a managing clerk conducted the business, and drew up an under lease. It so happened that one of the conditions of the original lease was that no portion of the premises should be underlet without the permission of the landlord; but there was this qualification—that license to underlet should not be refused unreasonably or arbitrarily. In law that qualification amounted to a restriction upon the landlord's arbitrary right, and it was admitted that if the consent of the landlord had been asked for, it could not have been refused. The landlord's consent was not asked for through sheer negligence. The clerk, in fact, had not referred to the original lease. It came to the knowledge of the landlord that Sir Henry Isaacs had granted an under lease without licence, and he commenced an action for breach of covenant. The Court had no power to stay the landlord's action; the landlord put in the covenant and proved the breach, judgment following as a matter of course, and an ejectment was ordered. Sir Henry Isaacs carried the case to the Court of Appeal, but the three Judges who carefully considered the matter came to the conclusion that having regard to the exception in the relief from the Relief from Forfeiture Clause in the Act of 1881, they had no power to grant relief. They also expressed an opinion that neither the common law nor equity jurisdiction enabled them to give relief. Thus, through this want of power to afford relief, a gross act of injustice was inflicted upon Sir Henry Isaacs, who lost a valuable lease worth many thousands of pounds. Then again, in the case of bankruptcy, what can be more monstrous than that a lease which may constitute the bulk of the property of a bankrupt should be forfeited by the mere act of bankruptcy, enabling the landlord to take an unfair advantage to rob the creditor and confiscate the premises? In regard to the question of execution a man perfectly solvent may have an execution levied upon his premises. He may suffer an execution for a legal purpose and with a view to an appeal; or an execution may be levied accidentally, but there is no relief from the stipulation, which declares that the levy of an execution upon the premises shall entail forfeiture of the lease. Clause 3 of the Bill provides that all leases containing a covenant condition or agreement against assigning, underletting, or parting with the property without the consent of the landlord shall be deemed to be subject to a proviso that licence or consent shall not be unreasonably withheld, and that no fine or sum of money shall be payable for such licence or consent. The object of a covenant of this nature is to secure that the under-tenant shall be a respectable and responsible man, and not to enable the landlord to extort fines or conditions. There have been cases in which avaricious landlords have enforced their arbitrary powers to the full in order to exact fines and pecuniary penalties. In my professional experience I have known many such cases. In one instance certain premises belonging to a wholesale house, which had been tenantless for some time, were leased for 21 years, and a retail business carried on in them. After a few years' occupancy the tenant put the business in the market for disposal. He agreed to sell it for £1,000, and then asked the assent of the landlord to assign the lease. The landlord refused his consent unless he received £500 or one-half of the premium, with the result that the business was not sold, and the tenant suffered a serious loss. If this Bill had been in operation the landlord could not have arbitrarily and capriciously objected to the re-letting of the premises or have refused his consent. Only this morning I received a letter giving particulars of a case in which a City Company has behaved most unfairly. I refrain from giving the names, but Mr. So-and-So being a tenant of a company, held premises in Hackney. He improved the premises for the purpose of enabling him to carry on the business of a mineral water manufacturer. According to the covenants of his lease he ought to have obtained the consent of his landlord, but as he had omitted to do this before carrying out his improvements he was required to surrender the original lease and enter into a new one with an increase of rent from £35 to £55 a year. The fact that landlords can exercise these arbitrary powers so unfairly is most injurious to leasehold property, and is calculated in many cases to work serious injustice. Indeed, the conditions of a lease of this kind without a qualification renders the lease itself unmarketable and places the tenant entirely at the mercy of his landlord. The object of the present Bill is not to make a good landlord do his duty because under any circumstances he would behave fairly, but to prevent a bad, unfair and avaricious landlord from taking advantage of the covenants of a lease. It is contended that covenants against assigning or underletting are necessary in order to preserve property in which there are valuable pictures and works of art. Surely such premises are not likely to be let except to respectable and responsible tenants; they are not likely to be sub-let to unscrupulous tenants, because the original lessee would always remain liable to the landlord. If the property were injured or works of art destroyed the original lessee would be responsible for the damage done. But if it should be thought that some qualification is necessary in the case of houses furnished with valuable works of art I would submit that that is a matter for the Committee stage of the Bill. So also with regard to what are called the amenities, which may apply to adjoining property belonging to the same owner. It has been ingeniously suggested to me that there might be a landlord with two or three marriageable daughters in a house possessing a lawn tennis ground; and that it might be very objectionable to find adjoining property belonging to this same landlord under-let to some one with a number of young sons. The suggestion seems somewhat absurd. I do not suppose the young ladies would feel inclined to object, but it serves to show what small and trivial objections can be raised to an important measure of relief. If there is anything whatever connected with the amenities of property to be provided for it is surely a matter to be dealt with in Committee and settled by a special clause. Clause 4 of the Bill gives protection to under lessees. The position of an under lessee—that is a man holding a derivative lease under a superior tenant—is one of a very unsatisfactory character. His position is very clearly defined in the law books. *Coote's Landlord and Tenant* says that "by forfeiture of the original lease all the under leases will be defeated as much as by effluxion of time." *Woodfall* tells us that if two houses are comprehended in one lease, and one of them is sub-let the sub-lessee of the one house is liable for any breach of covenant in respect of the other. All of us I daresay have experienced cases of hardship arising where the under-lessee has been put to trouble and expense through no fault of his own, but because of the fault of the superior lessee (his landlord), or of some other sub-lessee. The Court endeavours as far as possible to protect under-lessees, and the Legislature has to a certain extent stepped in. Let me remind the House of the provisions of the Bankruptcy Law as to disclaimers of deeds containing onerous covenants and conditions. The trustee taking property under lease subject to onerous rent, onerous conditions or covenants, is allowed to disclaim, but if there are any under-lessees or mortgages, or any innocent persons whose interests would be damaged by the disclaimer, then the Law does not allow him to disclaim without going to the Court and getting leave, and giving those who would be injured, notice, and the Court gives those parties the right to come and present their case, and to take upon themselves the burden of supporting the chief lease on which the in under-leases or mortgages depend: thus protecting the interests of under-lessees. If that is the Law in Bankruptcy, surely it is reasonable to extend it to cases not coming within the purview of Bankruptcy Law? It is just as great a hardship to the mortgagee or under-lessee or person interested to have his property or interest destroyed because his landlord neglects to perform the duty of the chief lessee, as it is because that landlord becomes bankrupt. In Bankruptcy the Court gives this protection, and I ask that it should be extended in the same way to leases out of Bankruptcy. I propose to do this by the following Section :—

> "Where a lessor is proceeding by action or otherwise to enforce a right of re-entry or forfeiture under any covenant, proviso, or stipulation in a lease, the Court may, on application by any person claiming as under-lessee any estate or interest in the property comprised in the lease, or any part thereof, either in the lessor's action (if any) or in any action brought by such person for that purpose, make an order vesting for the whole term of the lease, or any less term, the property comprised in the lease, or any part thereof, in any person entitled as under-lessee to any estate or interest in such property upon such conditions as to execution of any deed or other document, payment of rents, costs, expenses, damages, compensation, giving security, or otherwise, as the Court in the circumstances of each case shall think fit."

This is entirely on the lines of existing legislation for the protection of under-lessees and mortgagees and other interested persons. I am sure my hon. and learned Friends who will follow me will confirm me when I say that the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act, in reference to the disclaimer of onerous conditions, have been beneficial for the protection of innocent persons; and I ask that this same protection shall be extended to under-lessees generally. I may remind the House that under-lessees are very numerous, especially in London, where there are an enormous number of under leases. They are especially made for the purpose among other things in the suburbs of London of creating improved ground rents. In fact under leases probably comprise quite half of the existing leases affecting London property. Most of the occupation leases in London are under leases; and they depend on the continuance of the chief leases. The provisions of the Bill will enable the under-lessees to be protected to a certain extent, will prevent their leases being forfeited and wiped out of existence without their having an opportunity of representing their condition and circumstances to a Court and getting from the Court relief and protection, provided that can be given without detriment or injury to the chief landlords' rights. The Bill will not enable an under-lessee who has got a beneficial lease to obtain a reduction of rent or more favourable covenants than the chief lease, or to hold his property in defiance of the rights of the landowner, but it will enable the under-lessee to come in and perform the duties of the chief lessee, so that the under lease may be maintained. Looking at the enormous number of under-leases in London this Bill will have a far-reaching effect in giving security to a class of property in which millions of money are invested, in which tens of thousands of people are interested. The last section of the Bill is of a formal character. A doubt has been suggested in a recent case whether the Act of 1881 and its provisions for relief from forfeiture apply to agreements for leases as well as to leases actually created. For my own part I do not think, if I may presume to say so, that the suggestion that they are not included, rests on very good law, but the suggestion was made by a learned Judge, and has been commented upon, and now that we are dealing with the matter we may just as well set the doubt at rest, and, therefore, in this clause it is provided that agreements for leases which, for all practical purposes are leases, shall be dealt with in the same way as leases. The last sentence in the clause provides that "under-lessee shall include any person deriving title under or from an under-lessee." The object of this is to let in persons whose interests depend on the under-lease, such as mortgagees, or any person holding an interest under the under-lessee, in fact, all persons whose interests might be affected by this legislation. I would earnestly press upon the House the great importance of increasing the security in connection with leasehold property in the Metropolis. The Bill extends the Act of 1881, which is generally admitted to have had a beneficial effect. It in no way interferes with the landlord's rights, but it secures the tenant's property. It extends the operation of the Act in a direction it is generally admitted the Act should be extended. The leasehold property in London is enormous in its value. If we take the rental value of London at something like £40,000,000 a year, I venture to say that the leasehold rental and the rental depending on beneficial leases is half of that amount. If the capital value of the property of London in houses and land amounts to something like the amount of the National Debt (some £700,000,000 or £800,000,000), the leasehold property approaches very nearly half of that actual capital value. There are an enormous number of leases, and a large number of under-leases. The great landowners, of course, rely on their freeholds, but the business people of London, the middle classes, the industrial classes who hold occupation leases for their business, the thrifty artizan class are the persons who are the holders of the leasehold property in London. Anything that will give security to this vast property, and this very numerous section of the population, must be of enormous benefit to the community and commends itself on grounds of public policy. This Bill has been submitted to the careful consideration of distinguished lawyers on both sides of the House, to men of the highest position in the profession and in this House, and I am pleased to acknowledge the valuable advice which these distinguished lawyers have been good enough to offer me in the preparation of the measure. I believe the exigencies of their profession at this time constitute the only reason why they are not here to-day in larger force than they now are to speak in support of the Bill. Some of the most experienced solicitors in the profession have had the Bill in draft submitted to them. I have letters from solicitors in large practice dealing with leasehold property strongly approving of the Bill. I could mention many names —Messrs. Lewis, Messrs. Boulton and Sandeman, Mr. Peacock, and others in large practice, who have expressed their approval. With like result the Bill has been before many Building Societies—the Temperance Building Society, the Liberator, the Birkbeck, and others. The Building Societies' Association, composed of Building Societies from all parts of the Kingdom, who send delegates to head quarters, under the chairmanship of the right hon. Baronet the Member for London University (Sir J. Lubbock), had the Bill under consideration, and passed a resolution approving of the object and urging societies in alliance with them to support the Bill. I have letters from the official representatives of the Oddfellows' and Foresters' Societies—those who attend to the Parliamentary business of the various lodges—in support of the Bill. In reference to these lodges of Oddfellows and Foresters, I may mention that instead of investing their lodge funds in Consols or depositing them in savings banks, they are very wisely investing in mortgages and leasehold property for the purpose of offering encouragement to their members to become owners of the houses they live in. I may say fully half the money of these societies is so invested. I may mention another society which, perhaps, may not find so much favour on the other side of the House, the "Leasehold Enfranchisement Association," and others of a political character, who desire to see this reform carried into effect. In fact, I may say that a general consensus of opinion from all interested in leasehold property is in favour of this Bill passing into law. I thank the House for the patient hearing they have given to what, to many, is a very dry subject. The Bill has not a popular title, but it has a good and useful object. I hope the House will consider it is drawn on practical lines; it does not disturb any well-considered legislation or legal decision; but it is a Bill which, while it does not interfere with the just rights and interests of landlords, does give a large amount of security, and will confer great benefit upon tenants, and will give additional security to property largely held by the industrial part of the community. It will confer advantages to the thrifty classes and institutions, which, I hope, will always command sympathy in this House; and, therefore, with hope and confidence, I move the Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton.*)

*(1.16.) Mr. RENTOUL (Down, E.): I rise to move that this Bill be read a second time this day six months, and I do so because I myself have known many instances in the past in which this Bill, had it been law, would have worked the greatest hardship, and I think if hon. Gentlemen on both sides of the House will look carefully into this Bill they will have little hesitation in rejecting it. The Bill has been prepared and brought in by four gentlemen, all of them members of the legal profession, and all of them very fit to give a sound opinion on this subject. Therefore, the Bill is clearly not the offspring of any extreme faction, nor is it brought in for any Party purpose whatever. I believe it to be the expression of the deliberate opinion of very capable gentlemen, that the proposed change in the law would be for the public benefit; but I know that there are many gentlemen on both sides of the House who regard this Bill as an exceedingly bad and pernicious one. Now I do not go the length of saying that the law as it at present stands, does not sometimes work hardship, but I do say that the change proposed by this Bill would work a thousand times greater hardship. But let us look at the facts of the case. The Conveyancing and Law of Property Act, 1881, is, as the hon. Gentleman the Member for St. Pancras (Mr. Bolton) has said, universally regarded as a great and comprehensive measure. It is an Act that has been in operation for nearly 10 years, and seems in that time to have needed little or no Amendment; and yet this Bill proposes to repeal that Act in one of its most important and far-reaching particulars. But, well knowing the legal ability of the gentlemen whose names are on the back of this Bill, before venturing to oppose it, I talked the matter over with many members of both branches of the legal profession, and the vast majority of those I spoke to were against the Bill from every point of view, while some held it to be good in part and bad in part, but I did not meet with any lawyer who regarded it as good in its entirety. Now, it has been suggested that if there is good in the Bill, its principle might be accepted, and then it could be modified to any extent in Committee. But it is to the principle of the Bill that I object; for what is its principle? I think that no Gentleman opposite will venture to deny that the principle of this Bill is as follows: namely, that it permits a contract made in the most solemn and binding form known to the law to be deliberately made, and then five minutes afterwards deliberately broken. Nay, more than that, if this Bill passes a contract can be made in the most solemn form by deed under seal, with the deliberate intention of breaking it immediately after it is made. Does anyone deny that the Bill permits this? That is to say if this Bill becomes

law, a lessee can take a lease and bind himself by covenant not to underlet, and to suffer forfeiture if he do underlet, and then he can immediately go and underlet—or, to put the matter more strongly, if this Bill becomes law, the promoter of it, the Member for North St. Pancras may let his family residence to me, and by the covenants of the lease he may bind me not to let it to one particular person—say, for example, the Member for Wandsworth (Mr. Kimber), that is to say this supposed lease, by its covenants permits me to sub-let to any solvent tenant, but it makes one solitary exception, namely, the Member for Wandsworth, to whom alone, of all men, the lessor objects as a tenant for his house; and yet after entering into a covenant under seal that I will not let to the Member for Wandsworth, I go direct and sub-let to him, and because he is a solvent and in every way suitable tenant, the Member for St. Pancras must accept him, and has no relief whatever. Now, let me put the whole case as I understand it. Before the Conveyancing Act of 1881, if a lessee violated any of the covenants of the lease even a very unimportant one which he might have violated unintentionally, his lease was thereby forfeited. If, for example, there was a covenant to repair or to paint at a certain time and if the lessee happened to neglect to do so, his lease was forfeited and there was no relief possible. Now this was evidently a great hardship, and the 14th section of the Conveyancing Act of 1881 enacted that in all such cases the Court could grant relief on equitable terms, that is, on terms of the lessee doing what he ought to have done, and compensating the lessor if he had suffered any loss. Now, the Member for St. Pancras thoroughly approves of that section and so do I, but he objects to one of its sub-sections, namely, Sub-section 6, which he says is an exception to the relief from forfeiture granted by the section. But the so-called exception is not an exception at all, as we shall see, if we look at the rule as contained in the 14th section, and then at the so-called exception, as contained in the 6th sub-section. Now, what is shortly the rule of law, which is created by the 14th section? It is this: that the Chancery Division of the High Court has power to relieve a lessee from forfeiture, and save him from ejectment, in regard of any, and every, breach of any covenant, contained in his lease, if he is able and willing to remain in possession of the leasehold premises, and if he can, and will, make good the breach. But what is the so-called exception to this as set forth in Sub-section 6? That sub-section says in effect, that where the lessee is not able, or not willing, to remain in possession of the leasehold premises, and where he has in effect covenanted that in such circumstances he will give back the premises to his lessor, then the Court will not in violation of his covenant assist him to thrust upon his lessor another, and it may be an unknown or a disagreeable tenant. The rule simply says the law will not allow the lessor to eject the lessee for a breach of covenant, which can be remedied, and the parties put in *statu quo*, and then the 6th sub-section which this Bill tries to repeal, says—

> "Though the law will not allow the lessor to take advantage of the lessee by ejecting him for a breach of covenant, where no real harm has been done, neither will it aid the lessee to force a tenant on the lessor when in fact he has covenanted that he will attempt anything of the kind."

Thus the whole section protects the lessee from the effect of his own neglect or wrong, but the 6th sub-section saves the lessor who has been guilty of neither neglect nor wrong from being forced to do that which the lessee covenanted he should never be forced to do. Thus, while the whole section saves the wrong doer or covenant breaker from the agreed penalty of his own wrong, the 6th sub-section prevents that wrong-doer and covenant-breaker from actively taking advantage of his own wrong, in first breaking his covenant by underletting the premises, and then getting the aid of the Court to thrust his sub-lessee, the very offspring of that wrong doing, upon a lessor who has been absolutely blameless and extremely prudent and cautious in the whole business, and who has taken every possible precaution to save himself from the very thing the lessee is attempting to do to him. But someone says—cannot a lessee be ejected under Sub-section 6 without the possibility of relief? Now what is this 6th sub-section? If I pass over for the moment the part of it that refers to mining leases, then it deals with three cases—first, it enacts that where a lessee sub-lets or assigns he thereby forfeits his lease, if that lease contains a covenant of forfeiture in case of attempted under-letting or assigning; second, if a lessee becomes bankrupt and the lease passes to the assignee in bankruptcy, the lease shall be forfeited and there shall be no relief, provided the lease contains a covenant that it shall be so forfeited in that event; third, that if the leased premises are taken in execution the lease shall thereby be forfeited, provided there is in it a covenant that it shall be forfeited in such an event. Now, observe that in none of these cases does the lessor eject, or seek to eject, the lessee. In each of these cases, the lessee is already ejected or rather has ejected himself. In the first case, he has gone out voluntarily and let the sub-lessee in; in the second case the lessee is out and the assignee in bankruptcy is in; and in the third case, the lessee is out and the execution creditor is in. Consequently, in none of these cases is there any question whatever of ejecting the lessee, for such a thing is not possible; therefore, Sub-section 6 does not say to the lessee—You must permit the lessor to eject you, if you do or suffer certain things; but it says to the lessee—you have covenanted that a tenant shall not be thrust upon the lessor against his will; you have covenanted that your lessor shall not be forced to accept a tenant selected by you and to whom you have sub-let; neither shall the lessor be forced to accept your assignee in bankruptcy or his nominee, nor shall he be forced to accept your execution creditor or his nominee. Now, Sub-section 6, which this Bill is brought forward to repeal, simply says that a lessor who has taken the utmost possible care to keep in his own hands the right to select his tenant, and who has obtained a covenant to that effect, and who probably has accepted a much smaller rent in order to get such a covenant, shall not be forced to accept a tenant, however solvent he may be, unless he approves of that tenant and wishes to accept him; therefore this sub-section was inserted and has been kept in the Conveyancing Act not to give the lessor a right to eject his lessee for any possible breach of covenant, or under any possible circumstances, for that he cannot do, but simply to relieve the lessor from being compelled to take a tenant to whom he objects, on what are to him very real, though they may be sentimental, grounds. But it is said that this Bill does not take away from the lessor the right to object to the proposed sub-lessee if he has reasonable grounds for his objection. It is said, in fact, that the Bill only says the lessor shall not unreasonably object to a proposed tenant. But just as there is the greatest possible difference between "malice in law" and "malice in fact," so there is the greatest possible difference between the meaning which the Court must put on the word "unreasonable" and the meaning which the general public would attach to that word. The words "reasonable" and "unreasonable" could only be held by Court of Law to refer directly or indirectly to the pecuniary question with regard to the proposed tenant. If a lessee offered to the lessor a tenant who was perfectly solvent, and if the lessor admitted the solvency of the proposed tenant, but objected to him simply because he cordially disliked him and detested the idea of having any business relations with him, the objection would be held to be unreasonable, and the lessor would be forced to accept that tenant because the Courts can only look at the pecuniary side of a question and not at the sentimental side. If proof of this is needed, it is only necessary to remind the House that in an action for seduction the action must be founded entirely on pecuniary loss or the loss of service in the case, but not in the least degree on the pain and suffering and disgrace in the affair. Again, in an action for breach of promise of marriage it is the question of pecuniary loss, present or prospective, which the plaintiff has sustained that the Judge tells the jury to look at; and, again, in an action brought by a mother, under Lord Campbell's Act, for the loss of her son, she is not to receive one penny for her bereavement and pain and suffering, but is to recover simply an equivalent in money for the actual money loss she has sustained through the death of that son, and if she has suffered no pecuniary loss she cannot recover a penny. These instances clearly prove that the Courts can only consider the question of a pecuniary loss, and that, therefore, every sentimental objection to a proposed tenant, however strong and real it might be to the mind of the lessor, must be considered an unreasonable objection, and would be considered so if the lessee showed that this was the only tenant he could procure; and, again, even in regard to the solvency of the proposed tenant, or his fitness for the position of tenant, if the lessor objected to him he would be forced to prove the insolvency or the unfitness of that proposed tenant. Now, if it were perfectly immaterial to a lessor who his tenant is, provided his rent is certain to be paid, then there could be no objection whatever to this Bill; but I think I can show very many cases in which the lessor is likely to be far more anxious about the character of the tenant than about the amount of rent to be paid, and I will deal, as the hon. Member for St. Pancras has done, with ordinary leases first and with a mining lease afterwards. I think that I may divide property that is to be leased under three heads: first, dwelling houses; second, business premises; and, third, agricultural land. Now, to begin with, dwelling houses. The instances I shall give to illustrate my argument are every one of them cases with which I came in contact myself, in my practice or otherwise, and the facts of which I know. The first illustration is that of a family residence, a house in which many members of the lessor's family were born, a house every room of which is associated with the most sacred memories of his life. Surely it is not to every man he would let that house. Now, in this case a man let his family residence to a friend on the understanding that it was not to be sub-let, but there was no covenant against sub-letting; and if this Bill passes, there never again can be any such covenant having any binding value. That friend to whom the house was let, sub-let it to a personal enemy of the lessor. That enemy did everything he could in his mode of using it to wound the feelings of the owner of the house But some one says, that is a sentimental grievance, and is more suitable for the Emerald Isle than for an English community. But what is a very common and much applauded sentiment on English Radical platforms? It is this—

> "Touch it not, a mother sat there;
> And a sacred thing is the old armchair."

And that sentiment, especially when connected with Irish evictions and the tenant's love for his cottage home, always brings down the house. Surely, then, hon. Gentlemen will admit that sentiment in connection with a family residence, however humble that residence may be, is a very real thing, and that no man should be forced to accept as a tenant for that residence any person whomsoever, provided he is solvent, and provided he would be to most persons an unobjectionable tenant. Next take the case of a house in town, which I have purchased, and in which after a few years I intend to live. I let that house to the Member for North St. Pancras, knowing him to be a man of perfectly correct habits and moral life; but he under-lets it to a fast young man, who will, I feel absolutely certain, very often use that house, and every room in it, for immoral purposes. I could not prove this, and I dare not state it in Court as an objection to that young man, when he is offered as a tenant, but I am convinced it is so. Yet I am forced to accept that man because he is solvent; and because I can prove nothing against him; and he desecrates my house so that I never care to live in it again. Next take the case of a house filled with valuable curiosities and works of art, and I let the house to a man who is interested in such things, and I feel that he will, as a matter of taste, take the greatest possible care of them; but he sub-lets, in spite of my wish to the contrary, to a man who despises such things, and who will carelessly break, or lose, or damage them, and yet they are things for which money could not compensate me—and I must bear this loss and accept pecuniary compensation, although these curiosities were things of which I could have had specific delivery if anyone had agreed to sell them to me; therefore, this Bill strikes at the root of the sentiment on which the doctrine of specific delivery of chattels is founded, and indeed on which the whole doctrine of specific performance is founded. With regard to my next illustration, I have to complain that the hon. Gentleman the Member for North St. Pancras has not treated me fairly, for he has stolen my illustration of the young ladies playing tennis. He asked me the other night in the Lobby what reasons I had against the Bill, and I gave him the illustration of the tennis ground, and he has used it and tried to laugh it away, and yet it is a real case that happened, and a case of great hardship. A gentleman had a tennis ground on which his daughters spent a great deal of their time. He owned also a neighbouring house, which overlooked the tennis ground. He let this house to an aged couple, who were not likely to spend much of their time at the windows, and whose presence overlooking the tennis ground was entirely unobjectionable. But these people sub-let the house to a family comprising several rather fast young men, who spent much of their time at the window smoking and looking at the tennis ground, and the result was that the tennis ground had to be left unused, although the owner of it would rather have had the house which he let remain vacant than have his tennis ground rendered useless to his family. But now I shall pass to the case of business premises with a business attached, and the first illustration I shall take to show how much depends on the personal character of the tenant, is the case of a druggist's business. A druggist let his business premises and the trade attached thereto to a good and careful druggist. That man under-let to a druggist of very careless habits, who on several occasions sent out wrong medicine, and by this the business was ruined. A careful druggist then took the premises, and tried to work up the trade, but it was gone for ever, and a lease that was worth ten thousand pounds became not worth ten thousand pence. And all this happened because the owner could not object to the premises being let to the careless druggist, when he could not prove that that druggist was not a suitable man, though he firmly believed it. My only other illustration from business premises is that of a public house. Now, I know a case of a valuable public house let to a good tenant. He under-let to a publican, who was a little of a chemist, and who occasionally adulterated the drinks. This got known, and in a few months the entire trade got transferred to another public house, and all efforts by the lessor to bring it back proved unavailing, and a valuable property was thus entirely lost—a property which many might wish to cease to exist, but still a property at present protected by the law. Now, the third and last kind of property which I shall speak of is land for farming—and in this case the rent is not the important question at all. Everything depends on the character and agricultural skill of the tenant; so much so that I have known a case where two men, both equally and completely solvent, desired to rent the same farm. One offered £2 an acre, the other offered £3 an acre, and the owner accepted the man who offered the £2. Everyone knows that in agriculture it is impossible to bind the tenant by any conceivable stipulations to farm property. You may bind him to a certain rotation of crops, or to put on a certain amount of manure, and he may do all this and yet may destroy the land. Now, suppose I owned a farm in Essex, and I let it to the hon. Member for the Maldon Division —who I know is an experienced farmer —and he sub-lets it to a Scotch farmer, to a man who has been a farmer for many years in Scotland, how can I tell whether that man has been a good farmer or not, and how can I tell whether he can farm the Essex land properly, though he may have been ever so successful in Scotland? Yet on these facts I should be obliged to accept that tenant or prove his unfitness, which very probably I could not do, though he might be entirely unfit to farm the land without destroying it; therefore I think with regard to land for farming it would be a gross injustice to allow the lessee to select the tenant, when everything depends upon the skill and character of the tenant, and when the lessor has a covenant that the land shall not be sub-let. But now I come to the case of a mining lease. There is in it a covenant that the lessor may enter at any time and inspect the books, accounts, and weighing-machines, and also the mine itself. All this is absolutely necessary, for the rent is perhaps fixed according to the quantity of mineral which is taken, and it is only by frequent inspection of the books and weighing-machines that the lessor can estimate the rent. Again, the lessee, by working through barriers, may in a few days destroy the mine entirely. It is, therefore, of the highest importance that the lessor should be allowed to inspect the mine. The lessee has covenanted to allow him so to do, and the lessee refuses, not by mistake or accident—for from such cases there is at present ample relief—but the lessee wilfully refuses to allow inspection. What right has he a fortnight after, when the lessor is enforcing his right of re-entry and forfeiture of the lease, to come and say, "I'll let you inspect now?" I have now dealt, I think, pretty fully with what I call the first part of this Bill. The second part is contained in Section 4, which seeks to protect sub-lessees. Now, in so far as that section extends to sub-lessees, the relief which is already extended to lessees by the 14th section of the Conveyancing Act, there can be no objection to it; but if the 4th section of this Bill seeks to extend to sub-lessees what the previous two sections seek to extend to lessees, then, of course, it is equally objectionable. The hon. Gentleman the Member for North St. Pancras, in the concluding part of his speech, read letters from leading solicitors in favour of this Bill. Had I known that he would have considered such things as either arguments or evidence in this discussion, I could have produced dozens of letters from solicitors of eminence equal to any in England. He also gave weight to the fact that Building Societies are in favour of this Bill. Now, I am a Director of one very important Building Society, and I am counsel to some other Building Societies, and I do not see what need they have for a Relief Act, nor what they have to do with this matter. Indeed, the bare fact that they are so eagerly in favour of the Bill must necessary suggest some interested motive. The hon. Gentleman next said that the Oddfellows were in favour of the Bill. Now I am an Oddfellow myself, and I do not see what that body has to do with the matter at all. But the hon. Gentleman referred to the case of "Barrow *v.* Isaacs" as a case of hardship at which this Bill aims; but this Bill does not touch "Barrow *v.* Isaacs" at all. In that case the lessee had the absolute right to under-let. He had, however, to ask the consent of the lessor, but it was admitted that by the terms of the agreement that consent could not be withheld. Through the negligence of the clerk of the lawyer employed by Sir Henry Isaacs, the consent was not asked for, and the premises were let without it, and thereupon the lease was forfeited, and there was no redress. All that is very hard; but how often does it happen that valuable property is lost, or actions lost, through the carelessness of a clerk, or a solicitor, or a barrister, as the case may be? For example, a piece of evidence is not forthcoming when it ought to have been, or is not used when it ought to have been, and so the case is lost, and there is no relief possible; or a sentence or name is omitted negligently from a will, and a valuable property is lost, and there is no remedy. Cases like these, and cases like "Barrow *v.* Isaacs," will happen, and no Statute can meet them, and no Statute ought to try to meet them, because, in trying to do so, we only succeed in inflicting hardship on the many, and very possibly fail to relieve the few on whose behalf we attempt exceptional legislation. Or, take the case of a shopkeeper who sells a considerable quantity of goods to a customer, and through reluctance to sue or other reasons he waits till the six years have nearly expired within which he can sue for payment. He resolves to wait till the latest moment, and in the last day the solicitor's clerk neglects to issue the writ, or thinks that it can be served next day, and through this carelessness or ignorance the whole money, however much it may be, is lost entirely. Now "Barrow *v.* Isaacs" need not be considered, because it is a case of negligence, and also it is a case which this Bill does not touch; therefore, for all these and other reasons I oppose this Bill, because it is one of the greatest blows that has ever been struck at the law of contract, seeing that it deliberately sets aside the most solemn form of contract known to the law, namely, a covenant contained in a deed under seal, and forces a man to enter into a contract with a person whom he has never seen before or a person who may be objectionable to him from every point of view. As the law stands, there is no possibility in any case of a lessor ejecting a tenant or forfeiting his lease for any possible breach of covenant, provided the lessee wishes to remain in possession, or is able to remain in possession, and will make good the breach. The proposed Bill will not, therefore, give any relief to any lessee who will remain in his tenancy, which relief he does not possess at present; but this Bill seeks to take away the only protection which a lessor has to defend himself from having to enter into business relations with a man to whom he has strong personal objections, when he has tried by every means known to the law to protect himself from being forced into such a position.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question, to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Rentoul.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*(1.52.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): I rise to second the Amendment. The hon. Member opposite (Mr. T. H. Bolton) was equally eloquent upon the enormous value of the property which has grown up in London and elsewhere under the existing laws, and upon the enormous benefits which this bantling of his is to confer on that class of property. It seems to me that if leasehold property is exposed to such great dangers that this Bill is necessary to remove them, it is a very remarkable thing that so much of it should have grown up. There may be some hard cases, but I would remind the House of the old proverb, "Hard cases make bad law." The principle of the existing law I think I may take from the hon. Member himself. He said very properly that forfeiture or re-entry is a means to an end—a security for the performance of a covenant. I understand my hon. Friend (Mr. T. H. Bolton) to admit that forfeiture ought to remain as a final resort in case of the continued breach of a covenant. Equity for a great many years has gone on the principle that forfeiture or re-entry is the final resort in cases of continued breach of a covenant or in cases in which it is impossible to put the landlord in as good a position as he would have been in if it had not been broken, or to compensate him adequately for its breach. If there has been non-payment of rent, and the arrears of rent and interest are paid, the landlord is put in as good a position as if the rent had been paid punctually.

SIR H. DAVEY (Stockton): That is under the Statute.

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I think the Court of Equity had given relief in such cases before any Statute was made. In regard to insurance, the Act of 22 & 23 Vict. enabled the Court of Equity to give relief provided an insurance was in force; but the relief could be given once only. In other cases relief can be given by forcing the tenant to pay damages. In this Bill you do not carry that principle further, but reverse it. You are going to give the tenant relief for a continued breach of covenant, and to leave the landlord altogether powerless. It must be remembered that a consideration has been directly given for the covenant in all these cases. The tenant who takes a lease, subject to no covenant at all, is always willing to pay a higher rent than if the lease is burdened with covenants. My hon. Friend (Mr. Rentoul) just now gave a case in which a man because of his personal character was able to obtain a lease at £1 an acre less than it would have been granted to a rival candidate. Would it be fair and equitable that under these circumstances the lessee should be at liberty to sell to the objectionable tenant the very lease he had obtained because of his own personal character? I think that would be neither equity nor justice. The Act we are proposing to amend was the outcome of a very full and long inquiry and consultation with the leading members of both branches of the legal profession. It was brought in in 1880 when there was not time to pass it. It was again introduced in 1881 under the authority of Lord Cairns and Lord Selborne, and after having passed the Lords subsequently to being considered by a very strong Select Committee, came down to this House and was accepted as a full and fair measure of relief. Why should you now, without any greater case of hardship being shown, change the law in a manner which would so much injure the rights of property. It seems to me that this Bill affects all leases or contracts of whatever nature or kind, and that it imports into them an entirely new principle and new clauses. Under the Bill, if passed, all leases whether of 99 years, or lesser terms, will be subjected to the principle it embodies. It establishes rights such as no mortal has ever dreamt of or looked for. I can only hope that in order to carry out old principles, and not to act contrary to the principles of law and equity, the House will reject this Bill. (2.2.)

*(2.20.) Mr. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Rentoul) who moved the rejection of this Bill stated that he had not been able to meet with a single member of either branch of the legal profession who approved of the measure in its intirety. But the same thing might be said of pretty nearly every Bill which is brought in for the purpose of dealing with a difficult legal problem such as that with which this measure is intended to solve. Without committing myself by saying I approve of every word in the Bill, I may say that, in my opinion, there is nothing in it that could not be fairly dealt with on due examination in Committee, so that anything at all objectionable might be removed. I hope, therefore, the House will assent to its Second Reading. It seems to me that the vice of the arguments advanced against the Bill lies in this: that the hon. Members for East Down (Mr. Rentoul) and for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) both ignored the fact that this measure is an extension—and I think a legitimate and reasonable extension—of a principle that has been acted upon over and over again both by the Courts of Equity and the Legislature. Anyone familiar with the English Common Law must know that under it the position of the lessee is about the most precarious that can well be imagined. It shows, in point of fact, as has been more than once observed, that the law relating to real property was made by and for landlords and not tenants. If we refer to the old text books—to *Blackstone* and other writers—it will be seen that this is the case. But, step by step, the Courts of Equity, which have done so much to mitigate the severity and hardship of the old Common Law, as, for instance, in the case of husband and wife, and other similar cases, have invented the doctrine of relief for the lessee. This doctrine, however, was confined to three cases—fraud, mistake, and accident. There was the Statute of George IV., which provided a certain amount of relief at law in case of non-payment of rent. But the first actual legislative enactment extending the jurisdiction of the Courts of Equity in cases of forfeiture was the Real Property Act of 1859, which was introduced by a Lord Chancellor who was a Tory after the heart of the hon. Member for Stockport—Lord St. Leonards. His Act gave relief only in cases of forfeiture by reason of failure to insure, and the law remained for 20 or 22 years in that condition. Then came the Act of 1881, which this Bill seeks to amend, and it proposes to extend that Act very largely. I may say that every word in the arguments of the hon. Members who moved and seconded the rejection of the Bill would apply with equal force to the Act of 1881. We know that Lord Cairns's Act of 1881 carried the principle it embodied to a great extent, dealing with all cases except those where there had been a breach of covenant on assignment, where there had been forfeiture by reason of bankruptcy, and where there had been refusal of access to books in cases of mines. But this turned upon the condition that the judgment of the Court of Equity was favourable to the applicant. Yet these considerations the objectors to the Bill entirely ignore. Of course, the same principle would be still applicable in case of forfeiture to which the Bill applies. Anyone who refers to the 2nd sub-section of Section 14 of the Act of 1881 will see that the Legislature takes care of the interests of the lessor, and it shows clearly that the hon.

Member for East Down is wrong when he says that the burden of proof would be upon the lessor. The sub-section carefully guards the interests of the lessor. I am sure the hon. and learned Member will not say that the Court of Equity is even in these days likely to look with too much indulgence on the conduct of the lessee. There are two cases which show the view the Court takes of its duty under this sub-section. One is the case of "Bond *v.* Freeke," in which it was alleged that the tenant had committed a breach of the covenant to repair. The landlord declared the lease forfeited. The lessee brought an action in the Chancery Division, and the Court set aside the forfeiture on the lessee executing the repairs and paying the costs of the proceedings. In the second case the Court refused to grant relief where the lessee, after notice served upon him, omitted to re-ewn. These two cases show the principle on which the Courts act. The hon. Member for St. Pancras left that part of his Bill which relates to mining leases to those Members who understand them. I know a little about mining leases, and I cannot conceive anything more hard than that a lessee who has invested £50,000 in the development of a mine should, through the mistake of a clerk or under-viewer, who has, perhaps, an exaggerated notion of his rights, be liable to lose his interest. It may be said that lessors are generally reasonable, and so they are; but as my hon. Friend has pointed out, laws are made for unreasonable persons. The hon. and learned Member for Stockport (Mr. Gedge) reminds us that hard cases make bad law, and that may be so; but the converse holds good too, and bad law makes hard cases. It is not difficult to find many cases of injustice which this Bill would remedy. The 3rd clause merely carries out the principle established by the Act of 1881. Let me again remind the House that lessors have a perfect protection in the Court; the burden of proof is on the lessee, who must satisfy the Court that his circumstances are such as entitle him to have his claim granted. The clause provides that the licence or consent "shall not be unreasonably withheld," and we know that the word "unreasonably" has received a judicial construction. After all, you must remember that this protection is only that which the Court of Chancery takes care to insert in all leases which are drawn up and executed under its sanction; the Bill only makes that universal which is the practice of the Chancery Division. Of course, it is quite possible to imagine cases of some hardship, though I am bound to say that the case which the hon. Member for East Down put is an unlikely one to arise. For some reason or other the lessor objects to a particular person, but I think we cannot attach weight to a mere "Dr. Fell" antipathy. The lessor cannot complain very much, so long as the lessee pays his rent and fulfils the conditions of the lease; and, if he is a reasonable man, he ought to be happy to have a solvent man in occupation. Let me give an illustration on the other side. Suppose I have a house under a stringent covenant that I shall not assign or under-let, and supposing that from health or any other reason I have to go abroad during the recess—supposing even I want to go to Australia, a better way of employing one's leisure, perhaps, than making speeches all over the country. In such a case it is perfectly competent for my landlord to object without any reason, though I prove to him that the man to whom I wish to assign my interest in the house is a perfectly solvent and respectable man. He may be a most desirable lessee in every respect, but I go to the lessor, and he says "No; I object to the assignment unless you pay me such a sum of money." Well, it seems to me that the law, as it stands, really puts into the hands of the lessor a power which we know has been exercised of extorting money from the lessee, giving no advantage in return. It is altogether an unsatisfactory state of things, and I cannot help thinking that this 3rd clause will be a valuable relief to a very large number of persons. The hon. Member for Stockport says if leasehold property is so peculiarly subject to disadvantages of this kind, how is it that so much money is invested in this way? Well, simply because a man cannot invest his money in household property in any other way. It is absolutely impossible to buy freeholds in London. It is the

Mr. G. Osborne Morgan

only way in which a working man with a little capital can possess the house he lives in. I again urge upon the House the fact that this 3rd clause has the safeguard that the consent of the lessor shall not be "unreasonably" withheld. Everything turns upon that word which has received a judicial construction; and I am bound to say a Court of Equity will not be too indulgent on the side of the lessee, and we may take it that any real ground of objection—I will not say any flimsy ground, I will not say the objection of the windows of a house overlooking a lawn tennis ground, as mentioned by my hon. Friend—but any special ground would be considered by the Court. Then, again, as to the 4th clause, is it not unjustifiable that a man should suffer from the consequences of the acts of another over whom he has not the slightest control? As my hon. Friend has pointed out, protection against these consequences is given in the Bankruptcy Law. Why should that protection not extend to other cases? Clause 5 provides that agreements for leases shall stand in the same position as leases. This is perfectly reasonable, and, as a matter of fact, I have little doubt that in the eyes of a Court of Equity they would occupy that position. So far as I can judge every clause of the Bill is fairly drawn, and the Court will take care to hold an even hand, not allowing the lessor to be prejudiced by wanton acts of the lessee, or *vice versâ.* I think the discretion of the Court may be trusted, and that the operation of the Bill would be of great advantage to the enormous interests bound up with the leasehold property of the country.

(2.40.) MR. COOKE (Newington, W.): The Act of 1881 was prepared by one of the ablest lawyers of the day; it was referred to a Select Committee, upon which sat many well-known lawyers, and Sub-section 6 of Section 14, and the subjects connected with it, were no doubt thoroughly discussed by that Committee, and that Committee came to the conclusion to leave the sub-section as it stands in the Act—I presume because they thought that the persons contracting on this particular subject were able to make good contracts for themselves and knew what they were about. Hon. Gentlemen opposite—especially the right hon. and learned Gentleman who has just spoken—whenever any question arises between landlord and tenant, between lessor and lessee, seem to think that most of the members of the landlord class should be in Newgate and the tenants in Earlswood.

*MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I may remind the hon. Gentleman that I said the majority of landowners were reasonable men.

MR. COOKE: Yes, the right hon. Gentleman allowed there were exceptions. I had not the advantage of hearing the whole of his speech, and so I will not attempt to reply to it. What I have to say applies chiefly to agricultural leases, for with these I am best acquainted. In the present day it is not an unlikely thing for a tenant farmer, where a farm is in good condition, to take that farm, and in a limited number of years he runs it out; and if this Bill were to become law he would be able to under-let the farm against the will of the landlord—or if not against the will of the landlord, at any rate he would go to the Court to determine the question whether the man proposed to be put in was solvent or not. But that is not the tribunal to determine whether a man is a fitting tenant to farm the land. An instance came under my observation a few months ago. I had a farm to let in good condition—I farmed it myself—and I had many applications. Among the applicants was a gentleman extremely anxious to take the farm. I was not certain about his position, nor is it easy to ascertain a man's position. When you go to a man's banker the banker will say, "If he wants accommodation then I know a man's condition; but if he does not want it, I do not know his circumstances." Well, it happened that this gentleman did not take the farm. He took a farm about a couple of miles off, and in four months became a bankrupt. Upon my farm he, perhaps, would have lasted a little longer, for my farm was in the better condition. Now, if this Bill were law, that tenant might have run out the farm and sub-let, and I should have had no relief whatever. The one part of the Bill to which I assent is the 5th clause. I think it is desirable that agreements for leases should have the same validity as leases. But anyone with practical knowledge of the dealings between landlord and tenant in agricultural districts will, I am sure, agree in this: that the Bill will put power into the hands of needy men, of whom, I am sorry to say, there are many looking out for farms, to get possession of a farm in this indirect manner, and the property of the landlord will become greatly deteriorated. A landlord may have objections, though unable to submit them in absolute form. Of course, in agricultural tenancies there is no question of disposing of the land or property without the leave of the landlord, but certainly it does seem a very "strong order" to give a lessee in any case the power of disposing of the land of the landlord. It is not unreasonable for a landlord to withhold his consent, the tenant having originally covenanted not so to dispose of it.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: The hon. Member will observe that I have followed the lines of the Act of 1881 and the language used there.

MR. COOKE: Yes, the Act is there dealing with exceptions. I rest my strong opposition to the Bill chiefly on the ground of agricultural tenancies, for I am convinced from experience, not only on my own property, but as having had the management of a large property, that the Bill contains a power it would be extremely disastrous to place in the hands of tenants at this juncture.

*(2.44.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): We know that owing to the mere caprice of landlords cases of hardship do frequently occur, and I may mention a case such as is not uncommon in London. I am sure the Attorney General will be glad to hear that this comes to me from a respectable firm of solicitors who are good Conservatives, and therefore not likely to exaggerate the facts from political bias. The case I speak of relates to property in the Strand. D took a lease for 12 years, the original landlord being the Commissioners of Woods and Forests, and a few months back he desired to let the property, and he found a tenant willing to take it on condition that he was allowed to put in a new shop front. This did not seem a difficult matter to get over. The proposed tenant contemplated spending £600 on the improvement of the property. But D had to deal with three intermediate lessees — A, B, and C. He went to the Woods and Forests, and they consented at once if he would pay their surveyor's fee of a guinea. This was a very reasonable and moderate demand from the freeholders. Then D proproceeded with his negotiations with A, B, and C. A and B said they would give their consent to the transfer, and accept the new tenant on condition that their lawyer's and surveyor's fees were paid. But C met the request with a demand for £50 premium, and £3 expenses, his lawyer's and surveyor's fees, and without these payments refused his consent. Now we have been told about the injustice of thrusting a tenant on a landlord; but this was not a case of that kind, for the lessor was willing to accept the tenant, but required the payment of a sum amounting in all to £137 7s., and the under lessee was put to an expense including loss of rent while negotiations were going on of £198 7s. I do not know if the Bill would quite meet a case of that kind; but, if not, an Amendment would be prepared with that object. Surely it is reasonable that a business man under such circumstances should have a right of assignment without being subjected to such a heavy penalty. I trust the Bill will be read a second time. I do not think the House should refuse to entertain this reasonable proposition. As a matter of fact, the majority of landlords in London are reasonable, else we should have had an alteration of the law insisted upon before now.

*(2.42.) MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): It is due to the House, as my name is on the back of the Bill, that I should state the reasons for the faith that is in me. I did not take part in the drafting of the Bill, but I put my name upon it reserving full right to criticise its provisions on the Second Reading. There are sufficient grounds for giving the Bill

a Second Reading and having the subject threshed out. A number of hon. Members have expended a good deal of energy and rhetoric to prove how dangerous it must be if certain things should be allowed which, in fact, the Bill does not allow. For instance, in his cogent, closely-reasoned speech the hon. Member for East Down proved conclusively, and I perfectly agree with his argument, that it would not be right, and would be a bad precedent to allow one of two parties to the contract in which the lessee agrees that he shall have no power to assign to break that condition and let to a person objectionable to the landlord. But the Bill does not give the power to do that. The Bill enables the Court to give relief in certain cases. Now let us refer to what the Act of 1881 did. It established two principles; one was this: that whenever a forfeiture for breach of covenant in a lease is intended by the lessor he should at least give fair notice and a *locus penitentiæ* to the lessee 'for making good the breach, if capable of remedy. That is equity between man and man. No man should be guilty of the sharp practice of taking advantage of a technical line in a contract against good faith. In the Isaacs case we know the lease was lost by inadvertence, oversight, or negligence. The Act of 1881 gives the lessee the opportunity of making reparation before forfeiture. A man who has committed a breach of contract knowingly or not is to have notice from the lessor, and the Court can give relief where the thing is capable of remedy. The second principle of the Act is that while in every case notice shall be given, the Court has power, not to cancel the contract or to introduce new terms, but to say on what terms, if any, the lessee should be pardoned for his fault, and only "if capable of remedy." Mark the words. And the Court is expressly authorised by the Act to refuse relief. Now, this Bill brings under the Act of 1881 certain cases of breach of contract which were excluded from that Act. It does not deprive the lessor of anything; it simply says that the lessor shall not take advantage of the breach of contract and enforce the right of forfeiture or re-entry without giving the lessee notice, and opportunity to make good the damage where it can be made good. When such a breach has been committed the Courts may take into consideration whether the lessor has adopted the reasonable precaution of giving notice to the lessee or not. They may grant or refuse relief. There is no power given to cancel the covenant; the covenant is to continue. It is expressly said that the Court may grant an injunction against any future breach. The ingenuity of the hon. Member for East Down has been exerted very successfully to show that it would be very improper for a covenant against assignment and under leasing to be cancelled. We agree it would be very inequitable, but that is not the question raised by this Bill. I imagine the principles on which we should go are these: that arbitrary forfeitures for accidental mistakes and even for intentional mistakes, if they can be remedied, may be remedied. If the breach committed is not capable of remedy the Court cannot give relief. You cannot force a Court of Equity to give relief to a man who has committed a breach of his covenant which is incapable of remedy. In the second place, I think relief should be allowed to be given in cases of breaches which are involuntary on the part of the lessee. These involuntary breaches may, I think, be reduced to three in number. There is bankruptcy, which I suppose we may assume is an involuntary act. If a man who becomes bankrupt has a lease which is of value it seems to me highly immoral that any value remaining in the lease should not go to the unfortunate creditors. Of course, a lease of a bankrupt would only be vested in his assignees on the assignees undertaking that the covenants of the lease would be fully performed. In the case of bankruptcy it seems absolutely improper that an asset of the bankrupt should be allowed to be forfeited to the landlord. If a lease had any value there would be plenty of people ready to come forward not only to give a price for it, but to give a price for it on the terms of performing the conditions of the lease. Of course, if the lease has no value the question will not arise; the assignees would not take it. Secondly, let us take the case of an execution against a man's goods. I think one hon. Gentleman contended that an execution might not always be of an involuntary character as regards the person on whom it was put. If it was put in by collusion the Act would not apply at all; but suppose the case of a *bonâ fide* execution and of the execution creditor seizing the lease. If the lease has value, that value is saleable, and ought to belong to the execution creditor. Then take the case of decease. A lease to A B with a restriction against assignment would not, of course, prevent the lease devolving on the lessee's executors or administrators. If a man dies, those executors or administrators may be compelled in a variety of ways known to lawyers and others to realise and administer the estate; and it seems to me that if there is a lease of any value, a man's executors and administrators ought to have power to realise the value of that lease. The testator may have put a great deal of value upon it, and I cannot see why his estate should not get the benefit of what he has done. On these grounds, I think, there is a case for the Bill. I think that Courts ought to be enabled to administer equity outside the technical lines they are at present bound by. As an advocate of entire and absolute freedom of contract I would not allow any restriction upon men's freedom to make such contracts as they please, so long as they do not hurt their other fellow-creatures. I would not allow any terms which are adverse to that freedom to be imported into a lease against their will. For example, I would not allow the contract to be altered by the insertion even of a proviso that the consent should not be withheld except on reasonable grounds. The word "reasonable" is of the most elastic character, and I do not think that any other word in the language has given rise to so much litigation. I think I was justified in putting my name upon the Bill, for, while I maintain the importance of preserving the inviolable freedom of contract in all transactions of life, subject to the qualification I mentioned, at the same time I am of opinion that our jurisprudence should be so regulated that inadvertence and mistakes should be allowed to be remedied, and that the person coming under misfortune or forfeiture should have that *locus penitentiæ* which every human being ought to give to every other human being.

*(3.15.) Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I hope the House will note that only one Metropolitan Member has at present ventured to oppose this Bill, the hon. Member for Newington (Mr. Cooke). The hon. Gentleman made what the colonists call a cross-eyed speech; he was thinking, not of constituents, but of that farm in his own county about which he gave us such interesting details. But so far as his agricultural leases are concerned, he may make himself quite easy, as the Court has power to grant or refuse the application. I am bound to say I have not been able to understand or interpret the cheers with which the Attorney General has been encouraging the opponents of the Bill. They have made attacks on the Bill of 1881, and they have declaimed about interference with freedom of contract, although they know well enough that Lord Cairns in that Statute interfered every bit as much with existing contracts as the hon. Member for St. Pancras does in his Bill. Those who have gone into the leasehold question of London know how vast are the interests at stake and how they are placed in jeopardy by the restrictions made in the Act of 1881. In many of the outskirts of London the leasehold exceeds the freehold interest. The doctrines of equity, as explained by Chief Justice Storey, to the effect that the test should be either "due performance or the damage really incurred," are sufficiently wide to cover any such proposal; but, unfortunately, the rules of the Courts have become crystallised in a groove. It seems to me there is no more valuable part of this Bill than the 3rd clause, which provides that licence and consent shall not be unreasonably withheld from a breach of covenant and that no fine shall be paid in respect of such licence and consent. Evidence has been given before the Town Holdings Committee to show that in some cases covenants have been deliberately used, not for the purpose of safeguarding the amenities of a neighbourhood, but in order to extort in-

creases of rent. The Town Clerk of Southport showed that in that town a surprising amount had been accumulated in the shape of fines for breaches of covenant. There are estates in London where the agent goes so far as to charge a consulting fee before any of the lessees can obtain an interview with him. That is the case on one great estate, whilst there was evidence that on many another estate fines were levied for consent to the smallest breach of covenant, and it would seem that the covenants had been made purposely onerous, in order to enable these fines to be levied. I hope the House will realise how desirable it is to give greater security to those who have put all their earnings into leasehold property, and that it will give this Bill a Second Reading. I do not suppose that my hon. Friend will object to Amendments being introduced if the Attorney General thinks it necessary. The principle of the Bill, however, is just and reasonable, and I think the measure will be of infinite value to the occupiers and lessees of London.

(3.23.) MR. J. R. KELLY (Camberwell, N.) I desire to say a few words in explanation of the vote I intend to give in favour of the Second Reading of the Bill. I think if the measure had been made to apply only to urban leaseholds, and not to mining leases, it might have secured much more general support. But I trust the Bill will go to a Committee, and that it will there be amended, if necessary. There is no force in the objection that has been taken that the Bill is retrospective, because the Act of 1881 was retrospective, and this is only an Amendment of that Act. I do not propose to deal with the sentimental considerations which the hon. and learned Member for East Down (Mr. Rentoul) has put before the House. I think the subject is far too important for us to be led astray by any consideration as to the private tastes and conveniences of the few persons who live in the suburbs. I was a little surprised to hear that the most solemn contract a man enters into in the whole course of his life is a contract for the lease of a house. I confess I have myself entered into others which I consider to be still more solemn. All this Bill seeks to do is to enable the Court to protect a man against the default of another person. We give in the case of bankruptcy some of the relief which this Bill would give, and that which is done in the case of bankruptcy ought to be done in a great many cases outside bankruptcy. We admit that the majority of landowners are reasonable, and would not take advantage of the default of the first lessee. But we ask this House to protect the poor man against the grasping and avaricious landlord, reminding the House at the same time that in so doing we shall not affect the rights of the just landlord in any way whatever. It has been pointed out that all the House is asked to do is to sanction the principle of granting ample security to those who are interested in leasehold property. These cases are the cases of tens of thousands of people in our large towns, and, above all, in the Metropolis. The Bill asks that no man shall be ejected from his premises and have his property sacrificed because some person, over whose acts he has no control, has committed some breach of a contract with the landlord. As to the 4th clause I do not see how the landlord can complain if a lessee who has to leave the neighbourhood hands over his house to a person who is equally solvent with himself. I am almost astonished at the arguments that the parties to these leases are upon terms of equality when they are made. I would ask the House to consider what is the condition of the people who make these leases. It is a question whether it is not only fair to say that in this all the advantages are on one side, the obligations on the other. If people were free to choose in London between the conditions offered, and were able to select for a place of business that which was most suitable, if there was liberty of choice in the Metropolis in connection with leases, probably there would be little need for this Bill, or even for a leasehold enfranchisement measure. But if there is one city more than another in the country which is tied down under this miserable leasehold system it is London; and I trust that the House will allow the Bill to be read a second time, agricultural and mining leases being excluded at a later stage.

*(3.31.) MR. W. PRITCHARD MORGAN (Merthyr Tydvil): I desire to say a word from a mining point of view. Sub-section 6 of Section 14 of the Act of 1881 excludes, or rather prevents, relief being given in two cases: in the case of bankruptcy of the lessee, and in event of goods being taken in execution. As to the latter, I think the House has had full information; but in the other case, in reference to mining leases, I desire to mention a fact to the House. I had taken a mining lease and desired to have an extension, and I further desired to have a clause in the lease preventing the landlord from withholding consent to the assignment to a responsible person. For that I had to pay to the landlord on this mining lease, and simply to get a clause providing that he should not unreasonably withhold his consent, £100. Then there is the forfeiture of the mining lease in consequence of the refusal to permit inspection of the books or of the mine, and this is a provision most injurious in its character to the mining interest. In order to avoid being placed in the position of having their leases forfeited on the caprice of the landlord some mine owners are compelled to enter into contracts of the most injurious character to themselves. It may be that at some particular moment the lessee's manager may have refused to allow the landlord or a person in his employ to inspect the mine or books, and the lessee has to submit to most injurious conditions. Personally, I had, in one instance, to raise a dead rent of a mine from £200 a year and royalty on the product to £750 in order to avoid the forfeiture to which I should have been liable in consequence of refusal on the part of the manager to allow inspection. No possible injury could result to a lessor of a mine if a measure of the kind before the House were passed into law. He would be sufficiently protected, while the lessee would have relief from possible forfeiture as the result of carelessness or mistake on the part of a manager. For this reason I support the Bill.

*(3.35.) MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I have found some difficulty in making out what really is the principle underlying the Bill. The hon. Member for North St. Pancras has brought this forward as a proposal of enormous importance which is to cover him with glory and make everybody happy all round. My hon. Friend on my right (Mr. Kimber) only assents to the Second Reading on the striking out of a provision upon which the hon. Member for St. Pancras places the greatest possible reliance. I have endeavoured, as the Debate has proceeded, to discover the principle of the Bill. Amid much talk about this, the only attempt at a definition has been given by my hon. Friend the Member for Camberwell (Mr. Kelly), and I understand generally from him that the principle of the Bill is to give as far as possible absolute security to leasehold interests. Well, if we are to give absolute security to leasehold interests we must have before us a very different proposal to this to which my hon. Friend only finds himself able to give a very qualified support. It seemed to me that the hon. Member for West St. Pancras supported the Bill because he wished to have something done which is not in the Bill at all. He treated it as designed to give fixity of tenure to urban leaseholders, and regarded it as of importance, dealing chiefly with urban property principally in the neighbourhood of London. But I think for the carrying out of the ideas indicated by him a very different Bill to this would be required. The real question is, whether the House should alter the leading principle of the Act of 1881, which was to deal fairly between landlord and tenant without endangering the property of the former, while giving as much relief as can be afforded to the tenant? It does not seem to be necessary for those who do not see their way to support a Bill of which its promoters take so equivocal a view to affirm that the Conveyancing Act of 1881, known as Lord Cairns's Act, laid down its lines with absolute exactitude; but I am prepared to say that whether it be desirable or not to make slight relaxations of that law the grievances which have been pointed out in connection with its application are not of sufficient consequence to induce the House to disturb that settle-

ment. I think it is a good settlement, and without further experience of its working it is better not to disturb it. Hardly any cases of grievance have been brought to the notice of the House. It was suggested some time ago that I ought to be relied on to support the Bill on account of its reference to mining leases, I having had experience of the difficulties attending mining tenancies, but it is partly because I do not see anything fair in the proposals of the Bill for the relaxation of the law as between the lessor and lessee in mining leases that I am prepared to oppose the Bill. It is said that a lease may be subject to forfeiture from a breach of covenant to allow the lessor or his agent to enter the mine or inspect the books; but I should be sorry to have anything to do with a mine which would not bear inspection, and I am disposed to look upon the provision allowing inspection as a valuable engine for keeping a mine in good working order. It is most important to the lessor that he should have this means of access. Anything like injustice in the provisions of Clause 14 of the Act of 1881, to which this Bill would be applicable, I think we may dismiss as not worth notice. I do not know that it is necessary to labour the point, for, as I understand the hon. Member, he is really ready to give up this part of the Bill.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: No, I said that I, being a Metropolitan Member, left the Representatives of mining interests to express their opinion.

*MR. TOMLINSON: With reference to assignment, I think it is generally the fault of the lessee if he does not see that the covenant is properly limited; and I do not like to contemplate a state of things under which the lessee and the lessor in mining contracts would not be free to make their own bargains for themselves. Seeing, therefore, that the promoters of the Bill are so little agreed as to the form which it should assume, and as it tends to disturb a settlement of the question which, on the whole, has worked well, I oppose the Second Reading.

*(3.45.) SIR HORACE DAVEY: I will not prolong to any extent what I think has been a useful Debate, and which has brought out very strongly the nature of the grievances the Bill proposes to remedy, and the risks and liabilities under which leaseholders hold property upon which large sums of money have been expended. The hon. Member who has just spoken says he has experienced some difficulty in understanding the principle of the Bill, but I think the hon. Member's mind must be in the attitude of trying how *not* to find out the principle. Nothing can be more clear than that it is an extension of the very wholesome and useful provisions of the Conveyancing Acts of 1881 with regard to the power of Courts of Equity to relieve from forfeiture. The principle upon which the Act of Lord Cairns rests has been explained. Provisos for re-entry for breach of covenants are intended to be, and ought to be, treated as merely security for the performance of covenants. The Courts ought not to allow the lessor to re-enter and deprive the lessee of the property in a case where the breach of covenant, whether accidental or not, may be remedied or compensated for. That is the principle of those sections of Lord Cairns's Act to which reference has been made, and I venture to say that it is a principle which not only commends itself to the sense of justice of every man who considers the subject, but it is a principle to be found in every system of jurisprudence, including those founded on Roman Law—except our own. It is quite true that Courts of Equity did not relieve from breaches of covenants in former days, and that is to be regretted; but Lord Cairns's Act enables them to do so with few exceptions. Then it may be asked, why should the provisions of Lord Cairns's Act be extended? When that Act was passed, it was the first attempt of legislation to introduce into jurisprudence a general power of Courts of Equity to relieve from forfeiture in leases. It was perfectly right, and in accordance with the cautious way in which this House legislates, that we should at first apply this principle to certain cases about which there could be no reasonable question. I believe I was a Member of the Committee upon the Bill, though I forget all about the circum-

stances; but I can perfectly understand why it was that there were limitations to a principle introduced in a general way, though not for the first time into equity jurisprudence, that those responsible for the Bill thought it prudent not to extend the principle to every case. But now the country has had some 10 years' experience of the Act, and we have found it to work perfectly well; and therefore it is sought to extend its operation to those cases which were at first excluded. It is said that there are no grievances, but every one who has had any practical experience in dealing with leasehold property in London could cite cases where the power to eject for breach of covenant has been used in an oppressive manner for obtaining rights to which the lessor is not entitled, or where the withholding consent to a proposal to under-let has been made the means of extorting a fine or premium. That being so, I think there is a grievance. I am prepared to maintain that the object of a covenant not to under-let is to secure for the lessor a solvent, responsible person as lessee; and to my mind it is shocking that where a lessee, by inadvertence, has without consent made an assignment to a person about whose solvency and perfect respectability there can be no question, and where, therefore, the lessor has not sustained a farthing of damage—and if he brought an action on the covenant he could not recover a farthing damage—it is shocking that the lessor should be entitled to turn the lessee out of his property and confiscate all that has been spent on the property. This, I think, is an unfair state of the law, and upon that ground I hope the House will give the Bill a Second Reading. Some hon. Members who have spoken in opposition to the Bill seem not to have fully mastered, first, the object of Lord Cairns's Act and the object of this Bill. They have spoken under the impression that this Bill proposes to abolish covenant altogether. That is not so. It is only proposed to give the Court of Equity the power, where it is equitable and right to exercise it, to relieve a lessee from the consequences of breach of covenant. In any case where it is inexpedient, or where the lessor has suffered detriment which cannot be compensated for or remedied, the covenant will remain. It has been said, but I repeat it, that the Court will not interfere to alter the terms of the covenant; but where it can be shown that the interests of the lessor have suffered detriment, then the Committee may award damages, but the covenant will remain. I have not been through the clauses, and cannot say how far they command approval in every respect. It is urged as an illustration against the Bill that nothing could be more right and proper than that the landlord should have access to a mine. Granted; but suppose that the lessee's manager, through ignorance or stupid obstinacy, refuses access to the landlord's agent, is it not monstrous that the lessor should, under those circumstances, be able to eject the lessee? Is that not a case in which the Court may fairly adjudge compensation for default in fulfilment of covenant? The Court will have ample power to do justice between the parties. No doubt some Amendments may be introduced in Committee with advantage; but the principle of the Bill is right, and therefore I shall vote for the Second Reading.

(3·58.) THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I was anxious to hear the views of the hon. and learned Member for Stockton; I wondered whether my hon. and learned Friend would support the Bill on all the grounds which have been advanced for its Second Reading; and I am a little surprised to find my hon. and learned Friend had gone so far as he has, though I admit he has reserved freedom to qualify some of the proposals in the Bill we are now asked to read a second time. But I am here to oppose the Bill as we have it before us—not a Bill such as this might be made to be, but the Bill as it is. Members who have spoken have said they would be prepared to support the Bill limited to houses in London or to urban property, but that is not the Bill introduced. This is a Bill, as the hon. Member for St. Pancras frankly acknowledged in introducing it, which proposes to deal with leasehold property wherever situated in town or country, and I address myself to the proposals in the Bill. I was anxious to know whether my hon and learned Friend (Sir Horace Davey) would endorse some of the strange views put forward in the course of the Debate by supporters of the Bill with reference to the Act of 1881. My hon. and learned Friend was, I think, a little at fault when he implied that Lord Cairns's Act was the first dealing with these questions. Two principles underlay the Act of 1881, one of them being that if the landlord could be compensated, there was no reason why the lessee should not be relieved. Under Clause 14 of the Act, the lessor was to give notice to the lessee, specifying the particular breach, and requiring the lessee to remedy it. I would point out that where the lessee has assigned there is no need for a breach. I am not going to put extravagant cases, though I may remark that no one has attempted to answer in detail the well-reasoned speech of the hon. Member for East Down (Mr. Rentoul). Let us take this case: a person purchases two houses, semi-detached, occupies one himself and lets the other to a particular tenant for £100, when from a stranger he might have got £150. If the tenant then wishes to assign his house to another person in the teeth of a restriction against assignment surely he ought not to be relieved. According to the hon. and learned Member for Stockton (Sir H. Davey), he ought to be relieved if the assignee is a solvent person. From that I dissent altogether. The lessor, having let the house for £100 instead of £150 in consideration of the character of his tenant, ought to be given the full benefit of the covenant against assignment. If that benefit be taken from him, the tenant may assign the house to a less desirable tenant for £150 a year, and thus pocket £50 in consequence of his breach of covenant. The landlord is entitled to say that the houses are only divided by thin walls, that it is of great importance to him that he should have a quiet tenant with whom he can really live on friendly terms, and that for this reason he has accepted £100 instead of £150. What equity would there be in letting the lessee break his covenant in order to put the extra £50 in his pocket? The promoters of the Bill propose that, under such circumstances, the Court shall have no material whereby they can decline to allow the assignment to take place. I want to know why we are not to deal with the case of land. Take the case of a man who has leased a farm. What justification is there for saying that the only thing to be regarded is the solvency of the man who is to be the assignee? Then I want to know what my hon. and learned Friend will say about bankruptcy. Here is actually a proposal that, although a tenant may be bankrupt, and a landlord may be saddled with all the inconveniencies of a bankrupt tenant, there is to be no relief. Only one argument has been adduced in the whole course of this Debate in regard to that. That was the argument that any profit which existed in the leasehold interest ought to go to the creditors of the bankrupt, and not to the landlord. But these are not the considerations which ought to affect the minds of Members of this House in dealing with this matter. In a contract between landlord and tenant there are personal relations involved, and it is proper and reasonable that, in a case of bankruptcy, the landlord should not have to deal either with a bankrupt tenant or with a tenant who will be put in by a forced sale. Then as to covenants providing for the inspection of mines, and plans and books relating thereto, these ought certainly to be enforceable for the protection of the landlord, who otherwise would have no control whatever over his own property which a lessee might be treating unfairly. I quite approve of the enforcement of a covenant which will act as a penalty or punishment against lessees who are unwise enough to decline to recognise the right of inspection which owners of mines and minerals should certainly have. I should take no objection to this part of the Bill; but, as to the 4th clause, what does it mean? It means that a sub-lessee shall, practically, have power to substitute himself, in certain circumstances, for the lessee. It is so worded that an under-lessee of a part may even have a claim to the whole. Probably that is a slip in the drafting.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: There may be only one rent. It may be necessary to acquire or maintain the chief lease in order to support the under lease. In this respect we follow the precedent of the Bankruptcy Act.

SIR R. WEBSTER: Then this is of the essence of the Bill, and is not a slip in the drafting. It makes my objection to the 4th clause all the better founded, because it proposes to give the under lessee the right of putting himself in as the tenant of the whole property, although previously he may only have had the tenancy or occupation of one small room. That seems to me a very startling proposal, and one which, as I have seen no cases given in support of it, it is impossible to justify on principle. The hon. Member for St. Pancras has, to a great extent, relied upon the case of "Barrow *v.* Isaacs." I would point out to the hon. Member that that case was tried 10 years ago, and so far as I am aware there have been no similar cases since. I would point out, also, that that case was, as it were, a mere accident, and that it would never have arisen but for the gross negligence of a solicitor's clerk. There was no remedy, the landlord being unwise enough to stand on his legal rights rather than take a generous view of a pure legal technicality. If this Bill has been brought in in consequence of that case, it is really a Bill designed to relieve persons from the consequences of the negligence of their solicitors. In the case of "Barrow *v.* Isaacs," the learned Judge, it should be remembered, pointed out that even if there had been a discretionary power in the hands of the Judge, the case was not one in which the Court of Chancery could have intervened. That opinion may have been well founded or ill-founded, but at any rate it shows that the case of "Barrow *v.* Isaacs" is no justification for this Bill. The hon. Member for Wandsworth, whose name is on the back of the Bill, told us he was not the father of the Bill, and he did not seem inclined to be its godfather. He practically made a speech against the Bill, for he said the state of things was such that you could not restore the landlord to his original position, and that there ought to be no remedy under the Bill.

*MR. KIMBER: I said that was the principle laid down in the Act of 1881.

SIR R. WEBSTER: The cases with which this Bill deals are cases in which the landlord could not be put back in the same position. If the hon. Member had read the Bill and mastered its contents, he would have seen that his vote ought to have been against it, just as his speech was against it. There are two cases which are of importance. In the first place, if the lessee has signed away the property, it is impossible to put the lessor back into the same position if it is to be assumed that the assignment will stand. The other case is one of bankruptcy. How the lessor is to come back in the same position if the lessee he has chosen becomes bankrupt I cannot imagine. I think the Bill has been framed with reference to cases in which no doubt there may be grievances, but it does not afford any proper remedy for those grievances. In all probability it would, if passed, create far greater evils than now exist, and would not redress the evils for which gentlemen on the other side desire to provide a remedy. It is not because I am disinclined or adverse to dealing with these evils, but because it seems to me that the Bill overlooks altogether the principle of the Act of 1881, and that to amend it in Committee would lead to hopeless confusion, that I cannot recommend the House to agree to the Motion for the Second Reading.

*(4.17.) SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I am not going to follow the Attorney General into a history of the Act of 1881. I would invite the House to approach this question as a matter of business, and to see whether they cannot put the law, when there is a grievance—as the Attorney General admits there is—on a better and surer foundation. We start with this principle—"That the law abhors a forfeiture," and every lawyer knows that in many cases of forfeiture the punishment is not a real measure of the injury. If this forfeiture is unjust, let us consider what is the remedy. I submit that this Bill offers a right remedy for a wrong punishment of forfeiture.

The hon. and learned Gentleman the Attorney General has enforced his objection to the Bill, I will not say under a wrong apprehension of what the measure is, but he has presented the Bill in a wrong aspect to the House. The hon. and learned Gentleman has assumed that if there be a covenant entered into between the lessor and the lessee, and the lessee breaks it, the lessor will have no remedy. But that is a wrong reading of the Bill. What is proposed by this Bill is that if there is a covenant broken—if, for instance, the lessee assigns without consent—that shall be *primâ facie* a case of forfeiture. The law will remain as it is; but if the lessee then goes to a Court, and asks it as a Court of Equity to consider every circumstance of the case in order to see whether the lessor has really received any injury, the Court of Equity may grant relief, having taken into consideration all the circumstances of the case. That view the Attorney General has entirely ignored. If he has not ignored it he has not given effect to that position. The Attorney General has given a very proper instance of a lessor who, having no use personally of a house, says to a friend, "I will give you the use of the house at a rent of £100 a year instead of £150, which it is worth," and the lessee afterwards sub-lets it at £150 a year. The hon. and learned Gentleman asks whether in such a case the lessor is to forfeit his right. But this proceeding on the part of the lessee, which the Attorney General says would be a great hardship, would be urged with great force in a Court of Equity and would defeat any possible chance of relief to the lessee.

SIR R. WEBSTER: It has been contended by several speakers that the Court should have regard to the solvency of the tenant and nothing else.

*SIR H. JAMES: I am not answerable for what other Members have said; but that argument does not represent the contents of the Bill. As I have intimated, the Attorney General has ignored the fact that if there were such a state of things no Court of Equity would grant relief. If the lessor and lessee say, "We enter into a contract under these conditions, the house shall be let to you (the lessee) personally, because I (the lessor) do not want it to go to a stranger, and I will not even give you permission to under-let." If such were the contract, I do not think any Court of Equity would give the lessee relief if he sub-let. The clause assumes that there is to be consent to the re-letting. The question is this: if there is a possibility of re-letting ought the consent of the lessor to be withheld at the mere arbitrary will of one party to the contract, and ought that party to be allowed arbitrarily to say, "I will not allow you, the lessor, to sub-let because the name of the proposed tenant is Smith or Brown, or he is of this shade of politics or that?" Take the case of a man who holds land under an ordinary lease. He may be reduced in circumstances and unable from that, or some other cause, to cultivate the land. Would it be a reasonable thing if he desires to sub-let to someone who can cultivate the land to support the landlord if he said to the lessee, "I know you cannot cultivate the land, but I will not allow you to sub-let?" Surely that would be most unreasonable. In the case of "Barrow *v.* Isaacs" the Attorney General said it was an accident, but an accident according to law, which allowed the lessor to insist on those views which he was unwise enough to carry out. But why should it be unwise on the part of the lessor to seek to carry out the law? I think the unwisdom is on the part of those who would retain the law which enables a man to do that which is unwise. You say the lessor exacted his pound of flesh; but you are maintaining his right to exact his pound of flesh. With regard to the question of mining leases—which I will not go into—the books and property, no doubt, must be inspected by the lessor for his own protection; but it seems to me a great hardship to permit a forfeiture merely because some overlooker, through ignorance it may be, refuses to allow an inspection. A person must come with clean hands into Court; if he is unreasonable, unfair, or contumacious, the Court will not grant relief. I would make an appeal to hon. Gentlemen opposite. There is no reason to be conservative in this matter. The best way to conserve what ought to be conserved in our Statute Book is to be just—giving relief where it ought to be given.

(4.27.) Mr. JAMES STUART rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but Mr. SPEAKER withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

*COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): I am acquainted with a case—that of the White Swan public house at Deptford—in which the leaseholder desired to sell his lease to a man who was a perfectly proper person to succeed him, but the freeholder objected to the transfer unless he were paid a fine of £100. The fine would not make the proposed tenant either better or worse, and it therefore appeared to me a great injustice. I have no doubt that is not a solitary case. Doubtless landlords frequently take advantage of their position and exact terms before giving consent to a transfer, which consent it seems to me ought to be given without any money consideration whatever. The proper way for a landlord who owns a house adjoining the one he lives in to protect himself is to let on an annual tenancy. I have a house which overlooks my own, and, in order to secure that I shall be free from annoyance, I let it on a monthly tenancy, and while the tenant is perfectly friendly of course the arrangement works quite smoothly, but should the disposition of the tenant change I shall have a right to turn him out at very short notice. It is in consequence of the law relating to covenants in leases being enforced with such rigour that landlords and the law have become obnoxious. Even good landlords suffer in reputation through the evil deeds done by others who exact the strict letter of the law. I have no doubt improvement might be made in some of the clauses of the Bill. It must be borne in mind that although the original lessee may sub-let or assign, he is always liable to the rent, and at the end of the lease to return the property in proper repair and according to covenant. The landlord has, in fact, a greater security rather than a less one if the lease has been assigned or sub-let. For all these reasons I think the Second Reading might be fairly passed. The Bill will remedy points of injustice which have come within my own experience.

(4.30.) MR. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I am not going to encroach unduly upon the time of the House, but I should like to say a word or two from the point of view of the agricultural tenants. I have never understood that the agricultural tenants as a class have asked for a Bill of this kind, or have asked for powers as to sub-letting. It would be unwise, in my judgment, to make a sweeping change in the law affecting landlord and tenant until that change has been asked for by the tenants of the country. If the Bill passes in its present form, it will lead to a great deal of litigation. Is it not a fact that during the last 12 years of severe agricultural depression the class of farmers who have been enabled to tide over that disastrous period have been the tenants on large estates, and whose forefathers have occupied the same farms? I am quite sure that the tenant farmers on those large estates would not wish to have a change of this kind as between themselves and their landlords. Over and over again the landlords of those large estates have chosen their tenants because they knew the capabilities of those men, because they believed in them, because they were the sons of previous tenants, and possessed a practical knowledge of how to conduct farming operations in the best way in which they could be carried on. Many a large landlord during those 12 years of agricultural distress has let his farms at a rate below what he might have obtained for them in the open market, because he valued those qualities of his tenants. If you gave the tenant power to sub-let, the landlord would have no interest in the capability of the tenant to whom he granted the lease of a farm. How is it possible for any Judge or legal authority, whether of the Superior or Inferior Courts to decide that the man who had been accepted as the sub-tenant is capable of thoroughly carrying on the business of any particular farm? I will give legal authority of high standing credit for knowing a great deal, but I cannot admit that a Judge in London or anywhere else is the man to give me an authoritative opinion as to whether A, B, or C would be the right man to farm my land. For these reasons I hope this Bill will not be read a second time.

(3.35.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I had no intention of taking part in this Debate, and would not have risen but that I think the hon. Member who has last spoken is under a misapprehension as to the scope and operation of the Bill. It is admitted that if by the operation of this Bill an incompetent tenant were to be forced on the landlord in place of a tenant whom he could trust, there would be an end to it. Under this Bill the authority has power to grant relief.

MR. C. W. GRAY: Who is the authority?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I want to point out to the hon. Member exactly what would happen. The onus of proof rests on the man who departs from the covenant; and unless he makes out a case of real hardship in not being permitted to do a certain thing, of course the Court would not grant his application. The Court would, in the first instance, presume in favour of the terms of the covenant. A man might come to the Court and say, "I want to put A in my place." The landlord might say, "No; I disapprove of A, and I will not have him." Does anybody think for one moment that the Court of Equity would interfere in such circumstances? On the other hand, there might arise certain exceptional circumstances of hardship, which this Bill provides for—where a tenant, for example, had died, and the lease had descended to his widow. She might have found some one able and willing to conduct the farm, and it would be a hardship if an assignment were refused to her by a perverse landlord. It would be a proper thing for the Court to consider whether or not a hardship was imposed on the tenant in such a case. No such state of circumstances as has been referred to by the hon. Member could arise under the Bill, and the hon. Member is evidently going to vote against it under an entire misapprehension.

(4.40.) The House divided:—Ayes 159; Noes 141.—(Div. List, No. 72.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

METROPOLITAN WATER COMPANIES' CHARGES BILL.—(No. 25.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*(4.50.) MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I do not propose to detain the House more than a very few minutes while I explain the nature and object of the Bill, the Second Reading of which I rise to move. The object of the Bill is to prevent, at the present time, an increase of the water rates of the Metropolis by reason merely of the increase of the annual or rateable value that may be unconnected with water supply, and which may involve no commensurate increase in the consumption of water. We propose to declare that except for adequate reason the rate to be charged for the financial year shall not be increased because of a rise in the rateable value. I understand that Her Majesty's Government are willing to allow the Second Reading of the Bill, and that it shall be referred to a Committee if we on this side of the House are willing to allow the other Water Bills which appear on the Paper to receive similar treatment. I may say, on behalf of my London Liberal colleagues, that we shall gladly fall in with that view. But it is very important that this Bill should be referred to a Committee at once. London has been waiting a long time to have its water grievance settled, and now that we have a County Council, and that the water question has been raised on a Bill which has already been read a second time, and referred to a Hybrid Committee upstairs, appointed for the purpose of dealing with the whole question of handing over the control of the water supply to a public authority, we think that this is the time when we should endeavour to prevent the Water Companies raising their rates on the quinquennial revaluation which will come into opera-

tion on the 6th of next month, while at the same time we desire to prevent their raising the capital value of their undertakings. Since 1869 the Water Companies have had quinquennial re-valuations, and although in the meantime the rateable value of new property has always been allowed, the result has been that on these quinquennial re-valuations since that year, independently of the year 1891, the Water Companies have, estimating their charges on those re-valuations, increased their capital value to the extent of £4,000,000 or £5,000,000 by increasing their charges, independently of any increase of houses and water supply. This means that, taking the moderate estimate of 4 per cent., the income of the Water Companies has been increased by at least £160,000 a year, while their capital value is increased to the extent of £4,000,000. We are now to have in force a re-valuation on the 6th of April, and that at a time when a Bill dealing with the entire question of the London Water Supply has passed its Second Reading and been referred to a Committee. The effect of the present re-valuation would be a gross rateable increase of £1,500,000, and taking off that sum £250,000 for the normal or average yearly increase by reason of new buildings, and a further £250,000 for the increase in the value of gas-works, railways, and so on, upon which the Water Companies cannot make an increased charge, the companies are left with a net increase of capital value of one million of money just at the time when a public authority should be taking the Water Companies over. I might enter into a lengthy argument on this question of re-valuation; but as my time is short, I do not wish to run the risk of losing the Second Reading of my Bill, nor do I desire to excite any opposition on the part of hon. Members. I hope to hear that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Local Government Board, if he be in charge of this matter, will be able to give the House an assurance that this Bill shall be sent to a Committee along with the other Bills upon the Paper. We do not desire to give the Water Companies the power to levy an increased charge, nor to obtain the right to a large increase in the value of their property in the quarter ending the 30th of June. I may add, what I believe is pretty well known, that the West Middlesex Water Company have already signified their intention not to raise their water rates on the re-valuation, and I believe they have further stated their intention to allow a decrease where any decrease of value has taken place. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Theodore Fry) is going to move the rejection of the Bill. I hope he is not, and that he will be willing to allow it to go to a Committee where, I have no doubt, it will receive full and fair consideration. I think I have now said enough to show that this is an urgent matter, and that the measure now before the House is very different from the ordinary Water Bills which, on being introduced to this House, usually take a long time to deal with. This Bill can be dealt with at once. What we desire is to save the ratepayers of London £1,000,000, and we know that it is in the power of the Government to assist to save them this amount if they see fit to do so.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Causton.*)

Colonel **MAKINS** (Essex, S.E.): I have only risen to say that the arrangement mentioned by the hon. Member (Mr. Causton) is one which I am prepared to adopt; but I only make this statement on the understanding that, by allowing the Bill to be read a second time, we shall not thereby be committing the House to the principle of the measure. We only assent to the Second Reading *pro formâ* for the purpose of allowing the Bill to be considered by the Committee. As there is a desire to get the Bill before the Committee, I shall not attempt to go further into the question or to answer the arguments put forward by the hon. Member.

(4.49.) Mr. **THEODORE FRY** (Darlington): I do not rise to discuss this question in the interests of the Metropolitan constituencies, among whom it is not so popular as has been represented in some quarters; but as I have the honour to represent a large body of provincial Water Companies, which are deeply interested in these water questions, and an Association which has been formed for the purpose of attending to their interests, I wish to point out to the House that if a measure of this kind were allowed to pass into law in the interests of the Metropolis it would very soon be found to affect the interests of the provincial Water Companies throughout the country. The Bill which has already been referred to the Hybrid Committee, and the Metropolitan Water Supply Bill, which stands tenth on to-day's list, both embody the principles set forth in this Bill, and therefore it seems undesirable that this Bill should be thrown out altogether. Hitherto Parliament has always affirmed the principle that the water rate should be charged on the valuation of the houses, and not in any other way. One of the most objectionable features of this proposal is that the Water Companies' charges are to be reduced when the rating goes down, but are never to be increased when the rating goes up. Now that is manifestly unfair. The tendency of the Bill will be to lessen the burden of the water rate in regard to certain classes of houses, for the water charge may be fixed when the value of a house is very small, and immediately after the property may become many times more valuable. We know that this rating question has been referred to many Select Committees, with the result, as I have already stated, that Parliament has affirmed the principle that the water rate should be charged on the valuation of the house. Water has always been considered an absolute necessity, and the finest mansions in London would be valueless if they had no water supply. If Her Majesty's Government have decided that this measure shall go to the Hybrid Committee I will not challenge a Division; but it ought to be definitely understood that the principle of the Bill will not be affirmed by any decision which may be arrived at to-day. As a matter of form, I move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months, in order that we may hear from the right hon. Gentleman opposite what the intentions of the Government are with reference to this measure. My hon. Friend near me has argued as if the eight London Water Companies were merely eight different persons; but let me remind him that the great bulk of the shares have changed hands, and have been bought at their market value. This Bill is a proposal to lessen the value of those shares. It means confiscation, and I hope the House will be very careful indeed not to affirm a principle of that kind.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Theodore Fry.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

(5.7.) MR. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I hope my hon. Friend will withdraw that Motion as soon as possible, for it is only reasonable that this Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. The object of the Bill is to prevent the companies raising the value of their property just as it is about to be taken over by a Public Authority. It is far better that this matter should go to the Committee for examination, and I rejoice that the Government are willing thus to refer it.

*(5.8.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): When first I came to consider this Bill I thought it was not one of those Bills which it would be well to refer to the Committee which is going to sit upon the whole question. But, upon further consideration and examination of the Bill, I came to the conclusion that, on the whole, it would be best that the Committee should have all the questions involved in what is known as the "London water question" before it when it comes to deliberate upon the subject. I entirely concur with what my hon. and gallant Friend has said with regard to the position of the Government and of the House in regard to the principle of the Bill. It is to be understood on the part of the Govern-

ment, and on behalf the House generally, that in reading the Bill a second time we do so simply with a view of the whole matter being brought before the Hybrid Committee, and not at all because we approve the Bill. Taking the Bill alone, I should have a great deal to say with regard to the principle on which it is based; but it is unnecessary for me to enter into that now, inasmuch as the Government do not wish to ask the House to enter into a discussion on the principle of the Bill. No doubt it is true that the main question which the Select Committee will have to consider will be whether or not the undertakings of the Water Companies shall be taken over by some public trust and administered in the public interest. That being so, it is only right that the question of raising revenue on the basis of the assessment which is shortly to come into force should be a matter for the consideration of the Committee. I believe, therefore, the House will not consider it unreasonable that this Bill should go to the Committee. The hon. Member for Southwark was somewhat in error in saying that since 1869 the companies have been getting the benefit of the quinquennial valuation. Up to the year 1885 the companies had the right to raise their charges year by year as the value of the premises increased; but in 1885 that power was taken away from the companies by Parliament, and the companies have to wait for the quinquennial re-valuation before they can raise their charges. It would, in my judgment, be unfair to take away that power from the companies this year, just after the period of the quinquennial valuation, as they have not had the power of raising their rates until this year. However, I will not now discuss that question. I will merely ask the House to agree to refer this Bill to the Committee, which will have before it the other Bills.

Mr. WIGGIN (Staffordshire, Handsworth): I shall support the suggestion as to reading the Bill a second time, and sending it to the Committee if it is understood that the House is not committed thereby to the principle of the Bill.

(5.14.) Captain BOWLES (Middlesex, Enfield): I think, it ridiculous that the four Water Bills should be sent to the Committee separately, for all the fees and expenses will have to be paid in each case. It would be much wiser to consolidate them as one Bill, and thus save considerable expense. The whole question could in those circumstances be equally well brought before the Committee.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Select Committee on the Metropolitan Water Commission Bill.

LONDON WATER (METER) BILL.

(No. 26.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(5.18.) Mr. BLUNDELL MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich): I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time with the object of referring it to the Select Committee.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*(5.19.) Mr. H. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): My colleagues and myself will assent to this course, but it must be borne in mind we do not therefore pledge ourselves to the principle of the Bill.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I think the Bill ought not to leave the House without some discussion. It seems to me that the measure is one entirely in favour of the rich and of the wealthy tradesmen of London, and very detrimental to the interests of the working classes. In Berlin the system of measuring and charging for water by meter has been adopted, and it has been found necessary to employ an Inspector for every 400 meters. Therefore, if the system is adopted in London it will be necessary to appoint no fewer than 1,600 Inspectors. The Bill, moreover, while it compels the companies to go to the expense of £3,000,000 sterling in securing meters, provides no means by which to raise the money, and though it compels them to put meters in the various houses of London it imposes no obligation on the consumers to use them. Further, the Bill may necessitate landlords in London putting in their leases the amount of water to be used by their tenants. In short, it is of such a complicated and confiscating character that I am surprised to find any of my friends on this side of the House supporting the Bill. I protest against its proceeding further.

(5.21.) Mr. THEODORE FRY: I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time this day six months. It is admitted by the hon. Member opposite to be bad in principle, and it ought not to be sent to a Select Committee. The Bill is eminently one in favour of the rich as against the poor. What will be really the effect of a measure of this kind? Many of the wealthy houses in London are shut up for several months in the year, during which time little or no water is used in them; and if a system of payment by meter is adopted, the charge upon the owners of such houses as these will be comparatively small. A rich man, who is an hon. Member of this House, to-day told me that he had refused to be put on the Committee to consider this question, because the result of such a Bill as this would be to put so much money in his pocket, that he felt that he could not fairly support it. This fact alone shows how much the Bill is in the interest of the rich. If the Water Companies lose money by the metre system in consequence of the closing of the houses of the wealthy during a certain season of the year, they will be obliged, in order to secure their income and pay their dividend, to make a heavier charge on the masses of the community and the poor. There can be no doubt that if water is charged by meter the price will have to be very much larger than is paid at the present time, and there will be a constant endeavour to limit its use in order to escape charge. For instance, in No. 44 meter district, Cornwall Road, Brixton Hill, the water rate is now on the average £1 3s. 9d. per house per annum, but if the charge is by meter system at the rate of 1s. per 1,000 gallons, the rate will be increased to about £2 16s. 2d. per annum. In these circumstances, the water rate will be enormously increased on the poor if the companies are allowed to charge by meter. Further than that, the Bill would tend to limit the use of water for sanitary purposes, and thus endanger the public health. The Bill, therefore, is a very mischievous one. The cost of the meters, again, will have to be borne by the consumers, and this is not an unimportant consideration. The principle also of the supply of water by meter is an entirely new one. Before I conclude, I will remind the House that an important official connected with the Local Government Board —Mr. Stoneham—gave evidence before a Select Committee on this point, and in answer to a question said that if water was supplied to London by meter it would certainly lead to a curtailment of the power of cleansing the houses of the poor, which is not very efficiently exercised under present circumstances; that under a meter system insufficient water would be used for sanitary purposes, which would lead to an increase of disease; and that the sewers would become stagnant, resulting probably in an outbreak of cholera. Under these circumstances, I hope the House will not hesitate to reject the measure.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Theodore Fry.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

(5.28.) Mr. J. R. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I believe the meter system has already been tried, and been found to be unworkable. I hold that under no circumstances ought the House to consent to the supply of water by meter, unless accompanied by a maximum charge per year; for if water is to be thus charged it is only natural that the poor should try and use as little as possible. The hon. Member for Darlington has fully shown that the Bill is in the interests of the rich, and to the disadvantage of the poor, and I hope the House will think twice before it adopts its principle. I am not known to be particularly friendly to the Water Companies, but I do not know upon what principle the cost should be thrown upon them of supplying a community of 5,000,000 with meters. These and other questions, however, are matters which ought to be discussed in Committee. The House has little material before it to guide it in the matter; but such material as it has is of a character to induce it to reject the Second Reading.

It being half an hour after Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Friday.

METROPOLIS WATER SUPPLY BILL.

(No. 178.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(5.33.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

MR. HALSEY (Herts, Watford): I object.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I would appeal to my hon. Friend to withdraw his objection. This measure really constitutes the basis of the subject which has to be considered by the Committee. Its provisions in no way partake of the character of confiscation, but merely provide that by agreement or arbitration the Metropolitan Water undertakings may be purchased and a Water Trust formed to administer the water supply of London. It is generally understood that it is very desirable to have the whole question of the water supply considered by a Select Committee, and this Bill deals with the fundamental part of the question to be considered.

MR. HALSEY: I am exceedingly sorry; but I must persist in my objection.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I wish, on behalf of the Government, to appeal to my hon. Friend not to persist in his objection. It is a matter of the highest importance, from the point of view of the Government, that this question should be examined in reference to every interest. Any delay that occurred in reading the

Mr. J. R. Kelly

Bill might be exceedingly serious. On behalf of all Parties we strongly urge that this Bill should go to a Select Committee. We do not express any opinion on the provisions of the measure; but our proposal is that every interest concerned should have an opportunity of being heard before the Committee.

*MR. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Member withdraw his objection?

Mr. HALSEY intimated assent.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Select Committee on the Metropolis Water Commission Bill.

Ordered, That all Petitions against any of the Bills committed to the Committee presented Five clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of such Bills —(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

MOTIONS.

STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Lloyd Morgan, Bill to enable County Councils to provide for the appointment of Stipendiary Magistrates, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lloyd Morgan, Mr. Dillwyn, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Philipps, and Mr. Abel Thomas.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 238.]

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) ACT (1890) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Arthur Balfour, Bill to amend "The Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act, 1890," ordered to be brought in by Mr. Arthur Balfour.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 239.]

FACTORY INSPECTORSHIPS (QUALIFICATIONS, &c.)

Address for—

"Return of the Regulations at present in force prescribing the qualifications required from candidates for the post of Inspector of Factories, and the subjects of the examination which candidates are required to pass before appointment."—(*Mr. Byron Reed.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Sixth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 5th March, 1891.

NEW PEERS.

William Connor Lord Archbishop of York—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

Anthony Wilson Lord Bishop of Winchester—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

James Lord Bishop of Manchester—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be printed. No. 53.

PRIVATE AND PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILLS.

Ordered—

"That no Private Bill brought from the House of Commons shall be read a second time after Friday, the 12th day of June next:

That no Bill originating in this House authorising any inclosure of lands under special report of the Land Commissioners for England, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, shall be read a first time after Thursday, the 14th day of May next:

That no Bill originating in this House confirming any provisional order or provisional certificates shall be read a first time after Thursday, the 14th day of May next:

That no Bill brought from the House of Commons authorising any inclosure of lands under special report of the Land Commissioners for England, or confirming any scheme of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales shall be read a second time after Friday, the 26th day of June next:

That no Bill brought from the House of Commons confirming any provisional order or provisional certificate shall be read a second time after Friday, the 26th day of June next:

That when a Bill shall have passed this House with amendments these orders shall not apply to any new Bill sent up from the House of Commons which the Chairman of Committees shall report to the House is substantially the same as the Bill so amended:

That this House will not receive any petition for a Private Bill after Friday, the 1st day of May next, unless such Private Bill shall have been approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice; nor any petition for a Private Bill approved by the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice after Friday, the 8th day of May next:

That this House will not receive any report from the Judges upon petitions presented to this House for Private Bills after Friday, the 8th day of May next:

Ordered, That the said orders be printed and published, and affixed on the doors of this House and Westminster Hall." (No. 54.)

CLERGY DISCIPLINE (IMMORALITY) BILL.—(No. 45.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, in presenting this Bill to your Lordships and requesting you to give it a Second Reading, I have to state that it is in substance the same Bill as your Lordships passed in 1888, and again the same Bill that was read a first time last year and afterwards dropped on account of the pressure of business. It is in substance the same Bill; but since it passed in 1888 it has been very carefully considered by some of the most eminent members of your Lordships' House, and by others learned in the law, and I am happy to be able to say—it is a source of great satisfaction—that although the late lamented Archbishop of York opposed the Second Reading of the Bill in this House in 1888, yet in the shape in which it was presented to your Lordships last time it had his entire concurrence except upon one small point—your Lordships will consider it a small point when it is explained, as it will be, in Committee. In every other respect it received his complete assent, and would have had his hearty support. Since then the drafting has been again criticised by a very capable member of your Lordships' House, and I venture to present it now with much confidence. I think I ought to repeat to some extent what I had the honour of laying before your Lordships when the Bill was first introduced and first passed. I present this Bill to your Lordships as really a matter of necessity and as a matter of right—a thing which we have a right to ask. We of the clergy are appointed with much care and circumstance to serve this nation in things religious and things moral. It is our special duty to advance all the interests and enforce all the teachings of religion, above all things to raise the moral tone of those among whom we are, with so much of anxiety, appointed to work. Among 23,000 clergymen there must be a certain number who by common consent are designated "black sheep." There must, unhappily, be unworthy members in every profession and under all circumstances. But what we do feel, what we are sure of, is that they are but few in comparison with those great numbers. We have, however, to lament the fact that in very many instances the majority of those few are practically secure in their position. The difficulties of removing them, the difficulties even of suspending them for any proper period are so great that we, the clergy, may be regarded as maintaining in the midst of us a certain small, limited number of bad men, who are acting against and undermining the very function which the nation commits to us. We say, then, this is a matter in which we have a right to appear before you to ask you to grant us that we should be relieved from the discredit of such persons working and living in the midst of us. It is not a fair pressure that is put upon our work; it is not a fair discredit. Our enemies themselves being the judges, the thing is not fair. It is not right that it should not be possible to remove immoral men from the ranks of moral teachers; and when we consider the amount of misery that is produced among both their brethren and the laity, the comfort withheld from the sick and the dying, the mischief done to the young, the impossibility of these people accepting the teaching of such persons, and the doubts thrown up in many minds as to whether these men can really believe what they teach, your Lordships will see that the present state of things is very much like the action of the old tyrant King who bound the living to the dead. The close unity in which those, so to speak, "dead men" are placed among us and among the people whom they have to feed with the Bread of Life makes it imperative that we should ask in some way or other to be relieved. It is only right, my Lords, that I should mention what some of the principal hindrances are which make it necessary that the present state of things should be altered by legislation. The very first step in any process for the removal of such men, or for their correction in any adequate way is now beset with difficulties. Their case has first to be examined into by a Commission of persons without legal knowledge and without legal assistance. If those men return that there is a *primâ facie* case against the man accused, the Bishop must proceed. When the facts come to the appointed Court, although they may be flagrant and notorious, have been proved and established beyond a doubt in the Civil Courts, those facts have to be proved over again; and after that the man may remove his case from Court to Court by way of appeal, and the facts may still have to be proved over and over again. Then the cause is often heard at a considerable distance from the place of occurrence; and if it is a case of appeal, it must in nine cases out of ten be heard at a considerable distance, so that witnesses are exceedingly inconvenienced, and the expense in reference to them is very great. There is further great delay in carrying through the appeals. I remember well on the former occasion how your Lordships felt it to be, as it is generally felt to be, exceedingly unfair that in a large proportion of cases, even if the Bishop is successful in proving his case, the whole of the costs are thrown upon him, because it is not possible to meet them in any other way; and if he is unsuccessful, the costs may be enormous. Your Lordships probably remember there was one famous case, at no very great distance from the present time, in which a Bishop incurred an expense of £14,000, and his successor in the same case a further expense of £1,400. But it is not only the unsuitableness of such costs being thrown upon the Bishop, but the result—the moral effect—is so extremely bad if he fails to prove his case, as he may, through the operation of a number of technicalities. When so many obstacles have to be avoided, and the Bishop fails, in cases where immorality has unquestionably been committed, the effect upon the community is exceedingly bad. In such cases a Bishop is generally advised that there are so many technicalities, so many hindrances, in the way even of legal evidence, when the cases have been started by men who are not generally supposed to be versed in reviewing evidence, that his success would be more than problematical. Flagrant cases are at times kept back on that account. Then the process is not only slow and cumbersome, but one of the incidents of the procedure is that the sentences are given by precedents, without any regard to the interests of the place, the parish, or the whole Church. Naturally, in the long course of time, the precedents have become milder and milder; and as each case is tried and the sentence passed, the latest and mildest case is the one proceeded upon; so that all the legal authorities are perfectly agreed that the sentences which at present are capable of being inflicted under the system of precedents are quite inadequate. I may be allowed to give your Lordships a recent instance to show what I mean by the absolute futility of the sentences which are passed under this system. A clergyman was convicted of being drunk in the highway; he was convicted of riotous and disorderly conduct, and was fined by the Magistrates. The case was immediately sent by the Bishop to the Provincial Court; that was in the month of November. In the month of April he was suspended. The whole time from November to April was consumed in procedure, and the sentence passed upon him then was that he be suspended for three months. It had been impossible in the meantime to issue any inhibition, and this man had continued to officiate during the whole time. When the sentence of three months' suspension was pronounced upon him he went abroad; he came back radiant and assured his parishioners of the pleasant holiday he had been enjoying, and he is still in his place. These cases are very few comparatively, but they are very hateful to all. The system of journalism belonging to our times acts like a series of multiplying mirrors. Every case is heard of everywhere, and each several case is doing harm to religion and to morals in every parish, and raising up a host of enemies to the system under which such a state of things can exist and such scandals be perpetrated with impunity or with no sufficient punishment. If this state of things is carefully reviewed, it will show that we are not living under a proper system of punishment for offences against morality committed by clergy. By your Lordships' permission I will now give a very brief sketch of how this Bill attempts to meet the difficulties. In the first place, the Bill recognises absolutely and acts upon a conviction pronounced in a Civil Court. If a man has been convicted of offences against morality by a Civil Court and punished, the Ecclesiastical Court will, by this Bill, be enabled to proceed, taking the offence to be conclusively proved; and if he has been sentenced to penal servitude, if he has been sentenced to hard labour, if he has been convicted of adultery, if a bastardy order has been granted against him, it is so hopeless that the man should do any more good in that place that, according to this Bill, he will be deprived of his benefice. Supposing the offence or punishment to be less than these, any person may make a complaint to the Bishop, and the Bishop then, unless he is ready to declare in writing that the complaint is too vague or too frivolous to be proceeded upon, will send the complaint to the Court; but the Bill provides, and I think your Lordships will think properly provides, that with the consent of both the complainant and the defendant, or if the case is undefended, the Bishop may pronounce sentence at once without the process of the Court. The Court is not altered by the Bill. We do not propose to make any alteration. We believe that when the Consistory Court as it exists is put in its proper position, it is quite sufficient for what is required. Your Lordships know that the Chancellor acts as the Consistory Court; but the examination into facts by a Commission having been done away with, it is now proposed that where there are facts to be proved the Chancellor shall have the aid of six assessors if demanded. If there are facts to be proved, and the defendant demands that it shall not rest with the Chancellor alone, the Chancellor is by ballot to appoint six assessors out of a list. When the case comes into Court all questions of law are to remain as now with the Chancellor. The six assessors are to be four clerics and two laymen, making, with the Chancellor, three laymen and four clerics, to hear and inquire into the facts. Those six assessors are to be taken from a list formed for the diocese, consisting of seven clergymen elected in the way described in the Bill, and five laymen being Justices of the Peace, and appointed by the Justices for this diocesan list. The Chancellor will, by ballot, appoint six from the list for each trial upon which facts are to be inquired into. There comes in here a shortening of the process if both parties agree. In that event a case may be decided upon affidavits. Or again, if either party is not satisfied with the Consistory Court as it exists in his own diocese, he is free to appeal at once, and to transfer the cause to the Provincial Court; or he may appeal to the Queen in Council. We have thought it a matter of great importance that the number of appeals which are now possible should cease, and therefore the appellant will be at liberty to decide whether he will appeal to the Provincial Court or to the Queen in Council, but he is not to appeal to both. This point of appeal is a new feature in this particular Bill, and has been introduced since it was last before the House. The last Bill—and this was a point upon which the late Archbishop of York spoke strongly—did not provide that there should be any appeal upon matters of fact; but now, in deference to what he then said, and to what is ascertained to be a general feeling among clergy, an appeal is to be made possible by this Bill upon facts as well as upon law; but with this proviso and under this arrangement: not that a man, about the facts of whose case there can be really no possible doubt, shall have the opportunity at his own will of dragging the case before the Appeal Court; but it has been suggested by a noble and learned Lord in this House that the example set in the case of certain proceedings before the Privy Council should be followed, and that whether the man appeals to the Provincial Court or to the Queen in Council, he should obtain from the Appeal Court in the first instance leave to appeal. There would be no hindrance to justice in that, because he will *ex parte* state the facts upon which he bases his appeal, and if there is a *primâ facie* case shown the appeal will be allowed; but the Appeal Court is itself to determine whether there is such a *primâ facie* case as that the man ought to be heard over again upon appeal. Your Lordships will now observe that there is provided for already a very considerable shortening of processes and diminution of expenses in this procedure. I am told that in legal proceedings before the Privy Council there has really been, since the method was adopted of requiring the proposing appellant to obtain leave to appeal from the Appeal Court, an immense saving of expense. Then with regard to sentences: in this Bill there is inserted a provision that in the giving of sentences regard is to be had to the interests of the parish and of the place, and not to precedent alone in the interest of the clerk. The noble Lord is not present in his place who made an admirable observation upon this point. He said—

> "These trials of the clergy in such cases are under their old name trials *pro salute animæ.*"

and he said—

> "I think we have had enough of proceedings *pro salute animæ;* it is time we had some consideration *pro salute animarum.*"

Then it is provided that if the man is deprived of his benefice, and the case is very gross, he may also have his Orders taken away. It is again provided that if his sentence is of such a kind as that there is abundant time to expiate it; if there is a sentence of suspension for two or three years, for instance, before he can come back and be re-admitted, he must produce evidence of what his conduct has been in the meantime before re-admission; and there is a provision—it is one of the most important in the whole Bill—that he shall not reside during the period of suspension. There is no describing the fearful scandals occasioned by the residence of such men; and although they promise sometimes that they will not reside, they do not keep their promises, and there is no power to keep them away; the Bishop, it may be, sometimes does not feel sufficient confidence in them to require a promise from them. I can point to a case where a man has been suspended for extreme and shameless debt, but he persists in residing: he is living close to the church in the parsonage house; he insists upon presiding at every vestry; if funerals have to be celebrated, and families have applied duly to the officiating clergyman, the suspended clergyman, unless he has been consulted according to his own satisfaction and wish, will send the people out of the churchyard who have to dig the graves; he will open the church and show it to people (it is an interesting place); and tell them he is not above receiving gratuities from visitors. He has appointed his own half imbecile son parish clerk, who will go and touch on the arm and demand fees from the mourners at funerals; he interferes with the excellent school, and through some slight legal flaw in the election or appointment of the managers he insists upon ruling that school alone; he is gradually getting rid of all the scholars little by little, and is getting rid of an excellent master and promising pupil-teachers. No tyranny can be conceived more miserable and injurious than the tyranny which that man has been able to inflict upon an important parish owing to the fact that there is no power to prevent his residing during his period of suspension; and the only remedy that the law gives us is that perhaps with regard to the school we can get assistance from the Charity Commissioners. I think it will be admitted there is a very large gap in our procedure in the way of dealing with some of the most important interests which this country knows. Finally, then, the Bill makes arrangements by which some disgraceful scenes of defiance of sentences shall not be re-enacted, when a man under sentence forces himself into the church, takes possession of the churchyard, and insists upon performing services there. If this Bill passes such scenes will be scenes of the past. It will prevent such scandals by providing that the Sheriff shall be in possession of the church, chapel, or mission room, and shall place the right persons in possession for using them. Supplementary to this, there is another provision which one would have supposed not to be necessary, but it is—namely, that, if there is a grievous scandal about a case, the Bishop shall be able to prevent the man's officiating during the proceedings. Nevertheless, your Lordships will not find, I think, that this Bill is a hard Bill. Everything that is reasonable towards offenders has been considered in preparing it. The rule about convictions being conclusive is not to apply if they have been summary convictions without opportunity of appeal. Again, we have considered that the clergyman accused ought to be heard if he is able to advance mitigating circumstances. Provision is also made for his replacement in his benefice if he receives the Queen's pardon; or for re-trial; or, supposing judgment has gone by default from his non-appearance, and he is subsequently able to explain that non-appearance, in such case he may be restored. Also a proper limit of time is fixed, beyond which it will not be possible for people to be proceeded against. All those points are to be submitted to your Lordships; but I think it is desirable I should point out that, in the first instance, the Bill is not meant for inflicting wounds in all directions. We desire that wherever it is thought any reasonable deductions ought to be made they should be made. And now, with your Lordships' permission, I will just sum up the gains which are secured by this Bill. We shall have the assistance of the Chancellor in considering the facts of the case, and I think that a very important point; the convenience of witnesses will be consulted by the trials being held in places where they are able to attend without excessive cost; the door is closed against the many evasions which are now possible in consequence of the fact that the man now belongs to some different diocese or that the parties to the case reside here or there, or that the offence, or part of it, was committed in another diocese. Then, it is a matter of great importance I believe, and quite applicable in many of these cases, that the trials should be heard upon affidavits. A *primâ facie* case is required to be shown before an appeal is heard at all. This is one of the principal items, and a very great item, indeed as regards the expensiveness of these proceedings. It is required also that security for costs should be given wherever the Court thinks it necessary. Non-residence in suspension, as I have explained at length, and the non-officiating of the accused while his trial is still pending, are provided for; and it is also sufficiently provided that there shall be no defiance of the law when the sentence has been passed. I will not detain your Lordships longer. I do plead most earnestly that we ought not to be mere suitors for remedies like these for criminalities not only great, but so extremely offensive in their nature, and so destructive of the very reason for which our office exists. We cannot plead *in formâ pauperis* for this remedial measure. We believe that you will generously own that it is as a matter of right that the Church or any other Religious Body should come before you and claim from you the assistance which you only can give, to deliver a religious and moral institution of the highest importance to the welfare of the people from plague spots which at present it is unable effectually to remove.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2a."—(*The Archbishop of Canterbury.*)

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK: My Lords, the words in which the most rev. Prelate who has brought this Bill before you on Second Reading has referred to my eminent predecessor compel me to say, with your Lordships' permission, a few words to explain to you why I earnestly welcome and desire to support the Bill. I have always had a deep interest in this question. It was a matter of very great regret to me to find, something like a year and a half ago, that an ecclesiastical lawyer so justly eminent and distinguished as my predecessor took very serious objections to some parts of this Bill; and it is a matter of proportionate satisfaction to me to find that at the last those objections had been almost entirely removed by modifications of this Bill, and that he gave it in all its main features, and I think, indeed, if I rightly understand the most rev. Prelate, he gave it with the exception of one only, which is not a main feature, his support then and would have given it his support now if he had been spared to address your Lordships upon the subject. Measuring the importance of his opposition as I did measure it at the time, I think it may be to your Lordships a very great proof of the value of this Bill and of its freedom from objectionable matter in its altered form that at the last so able, so earnest, so conscientious, and so learned an opponent should have supported, instead of opposing, the Bill. I would venture to say a word or two, not as regards those details which have been so lucidly put before your Lordships by the most rev. Prelate, but as to the principles of the Bill which are my reasons for supporting it. This Bill appears to me to be based upon two principles, both of which will, I think, commend themselves to your Lordships' approval, and, I trust, to the approval of the country. The first is a very simple one. It is, that the incumbent exists for the sake of the parish and not the parish for the sake of the incumbent. To read the old processes of the Canon Law and the early processes of the Church Discipline Act one would imagine that there were no such persons in existence as parishioners: the whole proceedings were framed *in salutem animæ*, for the good of the soul of the delinquent clergyman alone, and they in no way concerned the manner in which he had discharged his duty to his parishioners. I cannot imagine a position of greater nicety and difficulty in which to place the President of a Criminal Court than to tell him he is to judge an offender and to inflict the penalty, not according to the heinousness or mischievousness of the offences charged against him, but according to the spiritual condition in which that offender may happen to be at the moment he is convicted. Obviously sentences may, on such a principle as this, vary *ad infinitum* from the greatest severity to the greatest lenity—even to the extreme of extending to the convicted offender free forgiveness, with a gentle remonstrance on the gravity of his offence. To permit such a state of things is to totally ignore the rights of parishioners. If a Judge in a Criminal Court were to act upon such a principle as that, it would lead to the strongest laxity in the administration of the Criminal Law. The most rev. Prelate has laid before you what the rights of parishioners are; but I venture to add this: that parishioners in the Church of England have a special right to have their complaints and grievances redressed for this reason, that they have not selected nor appointed the incumbent who has shocked their moral sense by his conduct. He is imposed upon them, and is practically irremovable by them. Surely they have a right to come to us, who have given him the cure and guardianship of their souls, and say to us, "This man has proved himself utterly unfit for his trust; he is doing mischief instead of good where you have sent him to do good, and we call upon you to remove him from our midst." What is the answer we give to the parishioners in such a case under the existing law? The answer is, "We will try this man 'for the good of his soul,' and we will send him away from his benefice for two or three months or for two or three years according as his soul may seem to require it, and then at the expiration of that period he will come back into the midst of you to the place where he has disgraced himself and you, to that place where he is practically useless we send him back." What, let me ask, would be the state of discipline in the Navy if a captain who was found drunk on his quarter-deck were to be simply told that he must leave his ship for a short time that the First Lieutenant would discharge his duty for him (at a very moderate salary) in the interim, and that at the expiration of that short period he should be permitted to come back with a certificate of good character, and take command of his ship again? I can see no difference between the two cases, except that the one is a far more sacred and important trust and office than the other. Such a state of things has much more serious consequences than if it existed in the Army or the Navy. No doubt it seems cruelly hard sometimes that when a man has been overtaken in a fault he should lose such a position as that of incumbent of a parish; and the case becomes painfully sad when we think not of the offender himself, but the innocent wife and children who are to suffer for his fault, but still the "good of the service," if I may be pardoned for adapting a term from military affairs, the very safety of the Church require that sympathy of that kind for the innocent shall not be allowed to prevail where the spiritual welfare of the parish is concerned, and that the punishment shall not be relaxed against the offender. This, then, is the first principle of the Bill; that the rights of parishioners are to be considered. The second principle is this: that in dealing with a criminous cleric you should as closely as possible assimilate the proceedings to those followed in the case of criminous laymen. I see no reason why they should widely differ as they have hitherto done in cases of criminous clergymen. If a layman is tried it is in a Criminal Court which is reasonably accessible, the processes of which are simplified largely and cheapened largely — as much cheapened as is consistent with a fair trial, and, of course, with a modest maintenance, which I hope will always be provided for members of the Bar—but those things being cared for a layman obtains a speedy decision of his case. Again; a clergyman who is tried before a Temporal Court for an offence against the law ecclesiastical, but which is also temporal, has his case cheaply, reasonably, and speedily dealt with. But bring the same man into an Ecclesiastical Court for the same offence, and the processes of trial and subsequent appeals are what your Lordships have heard described by the most rev. Prelate. Everything that can facilitate the trial of the cleric, as in the case of the trial of a layman, it is fair should be allowed not only to the accuser, the person who prosecutes, but to the offender, the accused himself. I confess I look with the greatest satisfaction upon the provision that when certain offences are committed entailing imprisonment they should be followed by deprivation. I am sure the most rev. Prelate is as reluctant as myself to stand up in this House and, as it is called, "tell tales out of school"; but we must, in support of a Bill of this kind, furnish one or two cases to your Lordships, thankfully acknowledging at the same time that they are very few, in illustration of what we say. Let me give your Lordships one case which occurred in my own diocese as regards this matter—of a clergyman being actually imprisoned for an offence and afterwards returning to his benefice. It will, I think, throw considerable light upon the necessity for this Bill. This was the case of a clergyman who was found guilty of an attempt to commit a very heinous offence which, had it been completed, would have been a felony. Not having, however, been found guilty of the felony, but only of misdemeanour, he was sentenced to imprisonment for 18 months. But that did not in the least vacate his benefice. All I could have done in the matter would have been to try him over again for that offence, and thus poison the Church and Society with a recapitulation of all the horrible details which would have been involved in his trial, not being sure, even then, by any means of depriving him in the end; possibly, "for the good of his soul," he might have had three years' suspension, but on the expiration of that term he would have come back again. Seeing, therefore, that after his imprisonment this clergyman would be at liberty to return to his parish, and thus become a centre of contamination, I was obliged to resort to the device which I will state to your Lordships. I sent word to him that though I could not compel him to resign his benefice he was bound by law to reside within it and not to absent himself for 12 months continuously, and that if he did then remain absent his benefice would become *ipso facto* vacated. As I am happy to say his imprisonment imposed a material barrier to his so residing, I was able by threat of deprivation to obtain his resignation. But I was only able to do it in that way. This is, of course, ludicrous; but it is very horrible to think that if the man had only been imprisoned for nine months he might have insisted upon going back to his parish and have there remained for years a shame, a misery, and a disgrace to the parishioners. That alone, my Lords, is, I think, an amply sufficient illustration of the need there is for this Bill. There is, however, if I may venture to say so, with all respect to the most rev. Prelate, one defect in this Bill, but it is a defect which I fear is incurable, and that is that it makes no provision for the costs of the prosecutor—really none. One thing is quite certain under this Bill: the only person who will ever prosecute a clergyman under it will be the Bishop. Your Lordships may be perfectly certain that no parishioner will do it. Men may be found who will form themselves into associations (and upon such associations I desire to be understood as pronouncing no opinion; I only take them as having actually been formed) for the purpose of prosecuting or defending clergymen who may conduct services in ways which they either approve or dislike; but, as far as I know, the Association of Laymen has yet to be formed for prosecuting clergymen who may be found intoxicated when performing any service. There is, I am afraid, all the difference in the world in these matters between party spirit and public spirit; and it requires a great deal of public spirit for a parishioner to come forward and prosecute his clergyman. Your Lordships may be perfectly assured that the only prosecutor will be the Bishop. I go further and say that he is the only proper prosecutor. I have no belief in Bishops not doing that which they vow to do at their consecration; that is, to punish all "disquiet and criminous" persons. It is a mere quibble that Bishops are the fathers of the clergy, and, therefore, may not prosecute them; on the contrary, I hold that the correction of sons is one of the duties of fathers. At any rate, it is clearly on the Bishops that these prosecutions will devolve. If that is the case, it does not seem right to me that a Bishop should be the only public prosecutor who should not have his costs provided for and who is to be, in fact, heavily fined for performing the duties of his office. But that is the case, for he is heavily fined in the shape of costs. Unfortunately, when very large Episcopal revenues were given up to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners no lien was placed on those revenues as it might very well have been, either for the police duties of the Church or for the augmentation of the Episcopate. Had that been done both would have been in a very different position now as regards the true interests of the Church. That fact it is impossible now to pass by, but I only refer to it for this reason: that if there are any clergymen who are, as I think, quite unnecessarily dreading that Bishops will be impatient to use this Bill as an instrument of oppression, or coercion, or spite, they may take comfort from the fact that the Bishop is bound over in heavy recognisances not to proceed unduly or hastily against clergymen under this Act, because in almost every case he will have to pay heavy costs. Either he loses or wins the suit, and the more heinous the offence charged the heavier the costs for the prosecutor. The mere fact of conviction for the offence of course entails deprivation of the benefice, and he cannot, therefore, come upon the benefice, because it has ceased to belong to the convicted clergyman; he cannot, therefore, get anything from him; and even if he could, I doubt whether there is a single Bishop on the Bench who would add to the pain and misery of that man and his family by seeking to enforce the payment of costs even if he had power to do so. Upon the Bishop, then, must fall the costs. I think, then, on behalf of the Church, and even on behalf of the over-burdened and overtaxed Bishop, the process by which an offender is brought to justice should be as easy, as cheap, and as efficient as is consistent with perfect and scrupulous fairness to the accused. Believing that the Bill does make those provisions, and that it carries out those two principles which I have endeavoured to submit to your Lordships for your approval, I do most heartily and cordially support the most rev. Prelate's Bill, and I earnestly trust that it may speedily become law.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: Perhaps your Lordships will allow me to add one or two remarks to the explanations of the two most rev. Prelates, for I think it is desirable that the public should be made fully acquainted with cases which show the necessity for the Bill, and its reasonableness in its present form. The principle of the legislation which is being attempted now is not new; it is only extending a little what was done some 30 years ago in an Act which is cited at the end of this Bill, where it is provided that

> "So much of an Act to abolish forfeitures for treason and felony and to otherwise amend the law relating thereto (that is, chap. 23 of 33 & 34 Vict.) as relates to a forfeiture by a clergyman of any benefice is hereby repealed."

That Act is only repealed because it is extended so as to embrace not merely treasons and felonies, but certain offences which, for all moral purposes, are just as bad and as noxious to a parish. I may be allowed to say with regard to the 1st clause of this Bill, which was at first drawn by me, that I took an existing clause in that Act and extended it by amendment. That is not very material, but it is material that the public should know that we are introducing no new principle by enforcing *ipso facto* deprivation. Of course, there is also the question of costs, upon which the most rev. Prelates have touched, but that is a difficulty which it is very hard to get over. There is just one point I must criticise, and which I do not understand, as there has been an alteration made in the Bill since the meeting at Lambeth, which substantially settled the Bill. A clergyman is to be allowed, after being convicted in a Civil Court of something which does not amount to *ipso facto* deprivation, to "show mitigating circumstances." I confess I do not quite understand what that means. The former Bill of 1888 had a clause providing that he might urge whatever he could "in mitigation of punishment." I understand it is supposed that there is some difference between the two phrases. But what is there to be mitigated except the punishment? The late Archbishop of York and I objected to the former phrase, and it was altogether omitted. I do not think the present one is satisfactory. The result of it is this: if a clergyman is guilty of an offence charged against him, and knows he is guilty, he may prove mitigating circumstances. But, on the other hand, if he is found guilty, but knows he is not guilty and is quite confident he could prove it if allowed, he cannot prove anything that will do him any good, because mitigation implies guilt. It is quite clear some alteration is required there, though this is not the time to point out what it ought to be, if it is desirable to keep that phrase in at all. Your Lordships may think, as I stated my own opinion to be at the meeting at Lambeth, that there are cases in which it would be fair to allow the clergyman accused to make out that he was not guilty at all; and I mentioned the memorable case of Mr. Hatch, who was convicted on the evidence of two girls, who afterwards admitted that they had committed perjury. What could Mr. Hatch have done under this Bill? Would he have been able to come to the Court and say, "I am not allowed to prove that I did not commit the offence which I am charged with, but I can prove mitigating circumstances?" Mitigating what? If he was innocent, of course there would be nothing to mitigate; and if, on the other hand, he was guilty, nothing could have been worse than such an offence, and how therefore, could it be mitigated? I hope, before we go into Committee on the Bill, some attention will be paid to this matter by some other noble and learned Lord who wants to make the measure as perfect as it can be. With regard to the matter of costs, that seems to me to be an incurable difficulty, except by the means which were pointed out by the most rev. Prelate who spoke last with whom I entirely agree. Moreover, the worse the defendant's case is the worse it will be for the Bishop; for if he is only suspended there will be some thing to pay costs with, but if he is deprived, nothing. That seems to be a monstrous injustice which does not, I believe, prevail in any other class of cases in England. At the same time, I believe it would be very difficult in these days to get anything out of the funds of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for such a purpose, though I think it will be admitted that this is a far more important matter than even the extension of the Cathedral of Truro, for which they and the Government quietly allow the Common Fund to be invaded. I am very glad to find that there is not, as far as I can judge, any appearance of dissatisfaction with the Bill, and I am happy to think, after attending the two large meetings at Lambeth, and seeing the universal agreement at such meetings, which included two strong opponents of the Bill of 1888, I think there is a presumption that the present Bill is, on the whole, a good and fair one.

The LORD PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Viscount Cranbrook): My Lords, if this Bill is passed in your Lordships' House you will hardly be surprised to find that the Government, so far from offering any opposition to it, will heartily support it, agreeing in its principle, but without, of course, committing themselves to details. I think your Lordships will agree that the Bill has been well threshed out in preparation, when the noble Lord behind me (Lord Grimthorpe) has only been able to find in it a very few words to mitigate the effect of his eulogy of the measure as a whole. That being the case, I think we may accept him as—I will not say *advocatus diaboli*——

*Lord GRIMTHORPE: Only of the clergy.

Viscount CRANBROOK: Well, at all events, the noble Lord, having accepted the Bill as a whole, will not be surprised that the Government should do the same.

Lord HERSCHELL: My Lords, I only desire to say a word or two upon this Bill. I have on previous occasions expressed my approval of similar Bills, and having expressed my approval of them, have said that I desired to see them passed into law. This is not a matter which concerns merely the discipline of the Church, but it is one of large public interest. Clergymen who conduct themselves as those clergymen do who are intended to be dealt with under this Bill bring discredit not merely on the Church, whose ministers they are, but they bring scandal and discredit upon religion itself. Therefore, it seems to me that a measure which seems to provide the means of speedily and successfully dealing with their offences is one which all who are concerned in the interests of religion must regard with sympathy and approval, and which all must desire to see carried into effect. I do not propose to trouble your Lordships now with any observations, except to say a word in reference to the point to which attention has been called by the noble and learned Lord opposite upon the details of the Bill; but I do desire to put before your Lordships the grounds upon which it seems to me the Bill may claim the support and approval even of those who do not regard themselves as members of the Church, and who would not support it merely as a measure for improving the discipline of the Church. With reference to the point which has been alluded to by my noble and learned Friend, it is, no doubt, a matter of difficulty. The scheme of that part of the Bill is, as far as possible, to make the findings of the Temporal Courts conclusive, and to avoid the necessity of trying the same facts over again. Of course, if you allow a person who is convicted in a Temporal Court to go into the question of his guilt or innocence again when the matter is heard before the Ecclesiastical Court, you add enormously to the expense of the proceedings. The extent to which that finding should be conclusive may, no doubt, be a matter giving rise to difference of opinion; but, upon the whole, I think one may very well be content that, where the Temporal Court has decided against a man who has committed that which is an ecclesiastical offence, the Ecclesiastical Court should be permitted, without the necessity of re-trying the case, to act upon the judgment of the Temporal Court. No doubt you may have hard cases in which a mistake has been made by the Temporal Court where you would not desire to see the person dealt with as guilty; but it is impossible to deal with matters of this description except as a whole; and, looking at the matter very broadly, when you so deal with it, it is necessary for furthering the ends of justice that you should shut your eyes to the possibility of the hard cases that may arise. But I quite agree with my noble and learned Friend that any provision of that description requires careful scrutiny and attention, and I think the most rev. Prelate would desire any necessary assistance in order to take care that the provision shall be made as satisfactory as possible.

On Question, agreed to; Bill read 2ª accordingly, and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Thursday next.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) BILL (H.L.)—(No. 17.)

House in Committee (according to order); an Amendment made; and Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee.

EAST INDIA OFFICERS BILL (H.L.) (No, 49.)

Amendments reported (according to order); and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

House adjourned at half past Five o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 5th March, 1891.

ITINERANT STREET MUSICIANS.

Address for—

"Return showing the regulations and control of Itinerant Street Musicians in Paris, Berlin, Rome, Madrid, Vienna, St. Petersburg, and New York,"—(*Mr. Jacoby.*)

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) ACT (VALUERS AND ASSESSORS).

Return ordered—

"Showing (1) the names of all the Valuers and Assessors hitherto appointed by the Commissioners under section 17 of 'The Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1886,' and section 1, sub-section 1, of the amending Act of 1888; (2) their previous profession or occupation; and (3) the amount paid to each for his services."—(*Mr. Angus Sutherland.*)

PAUPERISM (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Return ordered—

"Of monthly comparative Statements of the number of Paupers of all classes (except lunatics in asylums, registered hospitals, and licensed houses, and vagrants) in receipt of relief in England and Wales on the last day of every week in each month of the several years from 1857 to 1891, both inclusive;

"And, of Statements of the number of Paupers (lunatics and vagrants included), distinguishing the number of adult able-bodied Paupers, relieved on the 1st day of January 1891, and the 1st day of July 1891, respectively."—(*Mr. Long.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 130.]

QUESTIONS.

ENGLISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH AT NABLUS.

Sir JOHN KENNAWAY (Devon, Honiton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can obtain from Her Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople any information respecting the delay in granting a firman to the English Episcopal Church at Nablus, which was erected in 1881, and opened for service in 1882; and whether he will instruct Her Majesty's Ambassador to use his friendly offices with the Ottoman Government to procure the issuing of the firman?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Ambassador is using his friendly offices with the Ottoman Government.

DEFERRED ANNUITIES.

Mr. RANKIN (Hereford, Leominster): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will kindly state the number of persons who have purchased, in the Post Office Savings Bank, Deferred Annuities, payable after the age of 60; and what is the average amount of such annuities?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The total number of Deferred Annuities payable after the age of 60 which have been purchased through the Post Office Savings Bank is 568, and the average amount of these Annuities is £18 1s. 2d.

MR. RANKIN: Is that from the commencement of the granting of such Annuities?

*MR. RAIKES: Yes, Sir.

ELEMENTARY DAY SCHOOLS.

MR. RANKIN: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Council whether scholars attending evening classes, and who are also in the obligatory standards of an elementary day school, are in a position to receive any assistance from the County Council in respect of any manual or technical instruction given at the evening school?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): No scholar over 14 is, as a rule, recognised on the registers of a day school, and no scholar under 14 can be recognised in an evening school unless he is deemed by the Department to be exempt from the legal obligation to attend school, so that it is practically impossible for any child to occupy the dual position indicated in my hon. Friend's question. It appears, however, that scholars who having passed the Fifth Standard no longer receive instruction in the obligatory subjects are, if qualified to attend an evening school, eligible to receive assistance from the County Council in respect of manual or technical instruction.

STATE-AIDED SCHOOLS.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he can state the total numbers of male and female scholars and of male and female teachers in the State-aided schools under the inspection of Her Majesty's Inspectors in the United Kingdom, at the latest date to which statistics have been supplied?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: The latest published figures for England and Wales will be found on pages 239 and 242 of the last General Report laid on the Table, but the Returns for 1890 are almost ready, and will shortly be in the hands of Members.

LABOURERS IN WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War the decision as to the Petition of certain labourers in Woolwich Arsenal for increase of wages on account of heavy rents in London?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The position of the labourers employed under the War Office was fully considered by the Government at the same time as that of those employed in the Dockyards. We came to the conclusion that no general case was made out for increasing the pay of labourers in the Ordnance Factories. But as regards the unskilled labourers in the employment of the Army Ordnance Store Department, we propose to follow generally at Woolwich, Portsmouth, Devonport, and Chatham the lines recently announced in the Circular from the Admiralty.

SHIPMENT OF INCOMPETENT SEAMEN AT CARDIFF.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the illegal shipment of incompetent seamen as A.B.'s at the port of Cardiff, as appears from the statement of R. Phillips and others, reported in the *South Wales Daily News* of 25th February, and also by the statement taken from the said R. Phillips and others by the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine at Cardiff; if he is aware of the fact that the men referred to, although incompetent and inexperienced, were signed on as A.B.'s in the presence of an official of the Board of Trade; whether, to prevent incompetent men from being signed on in future, the Board of Trade will cause instructions to be given that no man shall be signed on a ship's articles as an able-bodied seaman unless he is able to comply with "The Merchant Seamen (Payment of Wages and Rating) Act, 1880," sec. 7; if he is aware that the men so signed on as A.B.'s were brought to the ship by a person who is not licensed to ship seamen in accordance with sec. 147, subsec. (1), of "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854;" and, if these statements are true, what steps he proposes to take with regard to the official who has, in two separate instances, allowed the Acts which he is appointed to administer to be infringed?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): Yes, Sir; my attention has been directed to the cases to which the right hon. Gentleman refers, but I am not in a position to give a categorical reply until I have received the Report of the Cardiff Local Marine Board, who have made an inquiry with regard to all the circumstances. I may, however, add that it has always been held at the Board of Trade that there is nothing in Section 7 of the Merchant Shipping (Payment of Wages and Rating) Act, 1880, which confers power upon a Superintendent to refuse to allow a man to sign on as an A.B. without production of a certificate or certificates mentioned in that section. This view of the section is borne out by the following paragraph in the Final Report of the Loss of Life at Sea Commission, 1884:—

> "With respect to the rating of 'Able Seamen,' it is now the law that no man is entitled to be so rated unless he can prove four years' service at sea before the mast. There is, however, great laxity in this respect. Men are constantly rated as 'A.B.' without any inquiry as to their past services and with insufficient qualification: practically it rests with the masters of vessels whether to rate them as such or not. Nor does it appear to us that there is any certain method by which this can be prevented."

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: When will the right hon. Gentleman be ready to give an answer to the other part of the question, which refers to the action of the Department?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I cannot say at present. If the right hon. Gentleman will defer the question for a week I think I shall be able to answer it.

POST OFFICE TELEGRAMS.

MR. JACOB BRIGHT (Manchester, S.W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if the Post Office has the right, after determining the number of words in a telegram and securing prepayment, to demand a further payment if, through the inefficiency of their servants, they discover an increased charge should have been made by reason of more words being in the message than were counted at the time; and, if they have the right, will he give directions that the sender shall have the original message shown him, and in the case of long messages of several hundred words be allowed every facility to examine such messages?

*MR. RAIKES: The payment for a Press telegram is determined by Act of Parliament, and no servant of the Post Office, whether efficient or inefficient, has power to vary the charge. It has been decided in the High Court of Justice that where an insufficient payment has been made at the counter in the first instance, the sender of a message is afterwards liable for the balance of the charge. The fullest facilities are afforded to senders to re-count their messages if they have any doubt as to the correctness of a claim for further payment. If the hon. Member has in his mind any case where these have not been allowed, and will communicate the circumstances to me, I will direct inquiry to be made.

BETTING AT RACE MEETINGS.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the recent decision of the Chamber of Deputies in France, which has decided to suppress every kind of public betting at race meetings, and even the Paris mutual bookmakers are to be interdicted; and whether the Government will take into consideration the expediency of proposing similar legislation for this country?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I collect from the newspapers that the French Chambers have rejected a Bill by which the Government proposed to legalise what is called the *pari mutuel*, and to levy a considerable tax on that form of betting. I also collect that M. Constans announced that if this Bill were rejected he would go to the opposite extreme, and would prosecute those who practised that form of gambling; but this decision does not appear to be final. The Government do not intend to propose any legislation on this subject.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I understand from the right hon. Gentleman that the Government proposed to legalise the *pari mutuel*. Is it at present optional?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I do not gather that the Government proposed to legalise it, but to impose a tax upon it.

SUAKIN AND TOKAR.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle upon-Tyne): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any proclamation has been issued by the Military Commanders at Suakin as to the intentions of the Egyptian Government towards the tribes; whether any terms have been made with the tribes in the neighbourhood of Suakin and Tokar, for the purposes of common action against the approach of hostile forces from Kassala; and whether, at the fall of Afafite and Tokar, any prisoners were captured; and, if so, in what way they have been disposed of?

Sir J. FERGUSSON: Since the right hon. Gentleman gave notice of this question inquiry has been made by telegraph, but as yet the Egyptian Government have no information on the subjects mentioned.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Can the right hon. Gentleman answer the third question?

Sir J. FERGUSSON: That, also, the Government are at present unable to answer.

SOUTH AMERICAN AND WEST INDIAN MAILS.

Mr. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that on a recent occasion the Royal Mail Company's vessel *Don*, conveying mails from South America and the West Indies to the United Kingdom (under contract as far as the West Indies are concerned with the Post Office), was detained 36 hours at Jamaica, in order that certain of the passengers might take part in a State ceremony; and that for a matter of fact the mails by this steamer reached Plymouth two days behind the contract time; who was responsible for this detention; and whether, as these mail steamers touch at several West Indian Islands, he would arrange that they should proceed on their voyages without any further delay than is entailed by the receiving or discharging of cargo or of coaling? I wish to substitute for the *Don* the *Orinoko*.

*Mr. RAIKES: I can only answer accurately the question as it appears on the Paper. The mail steamer in question was detained at Jamaica, not for 36 hours, but for 20½ hours, on the 27th of January, by order of the Governor, on the occasion of the opening of the Jamaica Exhibition; and although such action is certainly to be deprecated generally, I think this occasion was sufficiently exceptional to warrant it. I believe the course taken has met with general approval in the West Indies and at home. The steamer arrived at Plymouth 36 hours late, but the additional delay was caused by bad weather encountered on the voyage home.

Mr. WEBSTER: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the rate of postage from Barbados to Jamaica is 4d. per. ounce, whilst from either of these West Indian Islands to the United Kingdom, the United States, or South America the rate is only 2½d. per ounce; and if it is in any way practicable to reduce the postal rates charged by the various West Indian Islands, especially as between themselves?

*Mr. RAIKES: The reduction of postage recently made on letters between the United Kingdom and the British Colonies did not extend to letters sent intercolonially, as between Barbados and Jamaica, and, consequently, wherever the intercolonial postage was 4d., it remains so for the present. To extend the 2½d. postage further of course would involve further loss of Postage Revenue; but I hope to be able before long to submit proposals to the Treasury for applying the reduced letter postage to all parts of the British Possessions.

Mr. WEBSTER: I beg further to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the mail steamer from Barbados to the United Kingdom is timed to start two days before the outward mail steamer arrives; and whether, if that is so, it would be possible to arrange that the mail from the United Kindgom should arrive two days prior to the departure of the mail from Barbados to Europe?

*Mr. RAIKES: The time table for the West India Mail Service is arranged so as to afford the greatest amount of postal accommodation between this country and the colonies. The mails homeward are timed to reach this country on one Wednesday and to leave this country outward on the following Wednesday thus leaving a week's interval here for replies. This happens to involve, as my hon. Friend points out, an arrival of an English mail at Barbados two days after the homeward mail from Barbados to England has started; but I have not received any complaint from that Island on this point. In any case, I do not see that a re-arrangement of the service for the advantage of Barbados could be made without detriment to the more important communication between the West Indies generally and this country.

POSTAGE OF PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether there is any reason why the Blue Books and other Parliamentary Papers should not be posted to the residences of Members who reside out of London, as well as the Votes and Orders of the Day, without charge to the Members?

*MR. RAIKES: No charge for postage is made to Members upon Parliamentary Papers which are officially despatched from the Vote Office or Sale Office, and hon. Members can arrange with either of those Offices for the transmission of such Papers as they may wish to have forwarded to them when out of London.

MR. KIMBER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that if Papers other than the Votes are sent on additional postage is charged?

*MR. RAIKES: The Post Office does not authorise a charge for any Papers sent officially through the Post Office.

INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS BILL.

MR. KIMBER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has any objection to lay upon the Table and to circulate for general information a memorandum of the data and reasons upon which the Inflammable Liquids Bill is founded?

MR. MATTHEWS: If the hon. Member desires a memorandum I shall be happy to supply it.

IMPORTATION OF LIVE CATTLE.

MR. LENG: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether it is intended to lay the Report of the Intra-departmental Committee on the Importation of Live Cattle into the United Kingdom from Canada and the United States upon the Table of the House; and, if so, when it is likely to be presented?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Yes; the Report of the Committee in question will be laid upon the Table, and I hope it will be ready shortly after Easter.

CRETE.

MR. LEVESON-GOWER (Stoke-upon-Trent): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any recent information as to the condition of Crete, and as to the correctness of the report that disturbances have again broken out in that Island, and that, among other cases of outrage, two lads have been lately murdered and mutilated by Zaptiehs?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Papers will shortly be presented which will include the Reports of the British Consul on the state of the Island. It cannot be said that disturbances have again broken out, but frequent murders take place both of Christians and of Mussulmans. Some of these crimes are attributed to gendarmes. One of these cases was that of a Christian lad of 18, who was recently found murdered with circumstances of great atrocity.

MOUSSA BEY.

MR. LEVESON-GOWER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have any ground for believing that Moussa Bey is to be tried on any of the charges still pending against him; whether there is any prospect of his being exiled to Medina or elsewhere; and whether he is at present at Constantinople in actual or nominal confinement, or has been permitted to return to Armenia?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: According to the Turkish Papers, Moussa Bey was sent under police escort to Medina on the 19th of October last.

DISTURBANCES AT ERZEROUM.

MR. LEVESON-GOWER: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it be the fact that, although, according to Consul

Lloyd's Minute of 2nd October, 1890, many Christians were "detained in prison for long periods without any charge being made against them" in connection with the disturbances at Erzeroum upon 20th June, no prosecution has been instituted by the Turkish Government, in spite of the repeated representations of the British and French Representatives at Constantinople and promises of the Grand Vizier, against any Mahommedans for the murder and pillage of Christians upon that day; and whether, if this be so, Her Majesty's Ambassador will be instructed to press upon the Porte the fulfilment of these promises, in order to afford greater confidence and security to the Christians of Erzeroum and the surrounding country?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: No prosecution has, so far as we know, been instituted. Inquiry will be made as to what steps the Porte proposes to take in the matter.

AFFAIRS AT ZEITOUN.

SIR JOHN SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is a fact that Sir William White has received a Petition from the Christian inhabitants of Zeitoun, in Armenia, which contains the allegation that 400 children have died from the effects of poison intentionally introduced into the system when they were vaccinated by a doctor acting under the orders and direction of the Turkish Governor, Salih Pasha?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: No such Petition has, so far as we know, been received by Sir William White, but a letter was addressed to Her Majesty's Consul at Aleppo on October 21 last containing the incredible statement that 400 children had been vaccinated with intentionally poisoned lymph by a doctor sent by the Governor for the purpose, and had died in consequence. As I have already stated, Sir William White has taken steps to inquire into the truth of the varying statements that have been made respecting occurrences at Zeitoun.

THE CARD SCANDAL.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to a statement publicly made in several newspapers, that in September last, at Tranby Croft, Field Marshal H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, Lieutenant General Owen Williams, and Lieutenant Levett, were informed that Lieutenant Colonel Sir William Gordon-Cumming had cheated at a game of cards, and thereupon the three officers and others signed a paper agreeing to preserve silence as to the accusation, provided that Sir William Gordon-Cumming pledged his word never again to play at cards; whether the three other officers in question were guilty of an offence against the Army Regulations in signing a paper agreeing to preserve silence with respect to such an accusation; and whether it is intended to hold any Court of Inquiry into the conduct of the officers concerned?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I have seen the statement referred to, and I am given to understand that it will shortly be the subject of a civil action; and I must therefore, in common fairness to all parties concerned, respectfully decline to make any observations whatever upon the case.

MR. COBB: Am I, then, to understand that whenever circumstances which may have involved a breach of the Army Regulations are to be brought before the ordinary Courts of Law, the consideration of the question as to the breach of the regulations is to be postponed?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The hon. Member is only to understand what I said.

THE SOUDAN.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, in view of the fact that the Khedive of Egypt has abandoned the Soudan, but has not abandoned his "rights of sovereignty" over it, the inhabitants of that country are deemed rebels to their Sovereign by Her Majesty's Government; whether the *de facto* Government of that country is recognised by Her Majesty's Government; whether the sovereignty of the Soudan, claimed by the Khedive, is recognised by his Suzerain, the Sultan, since the Khedive officially announced that "he abandoned the country;" whether the rights of sovereignty claimed by the Khedive extends to Kassala and to Khartoum, and what are the geographical limits of the territory called the Soudan over which they are claimed; whether they are the same as those possessed by the Khedive Ismael; whether, when the Khedive "abandoned the Soudan," any places, except Massowah and Suakin, were excepted from that abandonment; whether he is aware of any official document, either published by Her Majesty's Government or by the Government of the Khedive, by which, either directly or indirectly, that part of the Soudan called Tokar was excepted from the general declaration of abandonment; whether any portions of the Soudanese littoral, except Massowah and Suakin, were excepted from the abandonment; whether, directly or indirectly, Her Majesty's Government has given any assurance that it would defend or maintain Egyptian authority in any territory beyond Egypt and Suakin; whether Her Majesty's Government has called the attention of the Egyptian Government to the fact that the military occupation of Tokar by a portion of the Egyptian Army throws increased responsibility and risk upon the British garrison in Egypt in maintaining order, and whether it is intended to call upon the Egyptian Government to make any increased payment to Her Majesty's Government in consideration of this increased responsibility and risk; whether Her Majesty's Government are precluded from entering into any arrangements with the *de facto* Government of the Soudan, or from obtaining from that Government exequaturs for Consuls from the *de facto* Government; and what is the area of the territory called Tokar, over which the Egyptian Government intends to exercise civil and military power, as a portion of the territories under the sovereignty of the Khedive?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: (1.) The rights of sovereignty are the Sultan's, not the Khedive's. Subjects of the Sultan resisting authority exercised in his name are rebels. Since 1885 the collisions which have occurred with any inhabitants of the Soudan have been provoked by themselves. (2. and 11.) We know nothing of the *de facto* Government of the Soudan. (3.) The Sultan of Turkey has not abandoned his rights over the Soudan. On the 30th of June, 1885, the Turkish Ambassador made a formal statement to that effect to the present Foreign Secretary. The Sultan has done nothing inconsistent with the title of the Khedive to the position of his Representative in his dominions in the Soudan or any part of them. (4, 5, 6, and 7) As I stated in answer to the hon. Member's question of March 2, we cannon undertake to define the limits of the Sultan's sovereignty in the Soudan. (8 and 9.) The only assurance given by Her Majesty's Government to the Khedive with respect to the defence of his territory is contained in Lord Granville's Despatches of December 13, 1883, and January 4, 1884—

> "They will be prepared to assist in maintaining order in Egypt Proper, and in defending it as well as the ports in the Red Sea."

And again—

> "Her Majesty's Government will on their part be prepared to assist in maintaining order in Egypt Proper, and in defending it as well as in continuing to protect the ports in the Red Sea."

(10.) Her Majesty's Government do not concur in the opinion expressed in this question. (12.) Tokar is a town, and the name is commonly given to the fertile oasis adjacent to it. We do not know its extent.

THE 2ND BATTALION SCOTS GUARDS.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it has been decided to bring back to England the 2nd Battalion of Scots Guards from Bermuda before the usual time that a battalion on Foreign service returns Home; and, if so, how he intends to treat the extra cost of transport involved in this arrangement so that it shall not fall upon the taxpapers?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: No decision has yet been come to as to the return from Bermuda of the 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards. Whenever they are moved the cost will fall upon the Transport Vote.

MR. COBB: Did I not understand the right hon. Gentleman to say last year that there had been no extra expense incurred?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: No doubt, Sir, that was absolutely true at that time.

SALE OF POSTAGE STAMPS BY LICENSED VICTUALLERS.

MR. COBB: I beg to postpone the question of which I have given notice, to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that in neighbourhoods where the Post Offices are closed at or about 8 o'clock in the evening many licensed victuallers are in the habit of obliging their customers by selling them postage stamps; and whether the licensed victuallers are liable to a penalty for selling postage stamps to their customers after the Post Offices are closed, or, in cases where there is no post offices in the immediate neighbourhood, at any time during the day?

GRANTS TO EFFICIENT VOLUNTEERS.

Mr. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N. Lonsdale): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he could explain on what grounds the grant of 12s. per efficient Volunteer is held to be enough for the provision of the equipments required under the regulations in the cases of country battalions; if he is aware that the lowest charge at which these equipments are procurable is 18s.; if he can make a distinction in favour of battalions whose detachments are widely scattered; and if he is aware that the regulation which limits this grant of 12s. to efficients on the previous October will adversely affect those corps which were below their strength at that time?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: At the time the grant was fixed at 12s., it was supposed that that sum would fairly provide the articles of equipment in which Volunteers were usually deficient. It is found, however, that the demand for such large supplies in a short period has had the effect of inflating prices. I am further considering as to the date when the equipment must be complete. I shall be glad if my hon. Friend will repeat his question a short time hence.

THE LATE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

Mr. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will ascertain from the Coroner for Westminster, and state if, in the oath which under the Act of Parliament he administered to the jurors at the inquest, the late Duke of Bedford was described, consistently with the warrant and jury summons, as "F. Russell," or as "Francis Charles Hastings Russell," or if he was described, inconsistently with such documents, by some different name; and, if so, by what name?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Coroner that the jury were sworn to the full name and title of the deceased person.

*Mr. COBB: May I ask what names were given? There have been several names mentioned in this case.

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have given the Coroner's exact words. I take it that the full name was the name in full.

REPORT OF THE SCOTCH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate what public purpose is served by Table B, No. 1, appended to the Report of the Scotch Education Department of 22nd July, 1890; whether the Department has any information to lead them to believe that anything like 120,283 children, being one-seventh of the children of school age, may be receiving "education in higher schools" in Scotland as set forth in said Table; whether he is aware that, according to the same Table, it would appear that there are 419,169 children between the ages of 7 and 12 on the school register of State-aided schools in Scotland, whilst there are only 395,851 possible children in existence in Scotland between these ages available to attend State-aided schools on the basis or assumption of the Table; and whether the Department will, in future, eliminate Table B, No. 1, from their Reports?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Bute): The Table to which the hon. Member refers has appeared in the Report for many years. The assumption of one-seventh as the number of children who might be in attendance at higher schools, was based upon very careful inquiries made by the Schools Inquiry Commission in 1867, and has since been adopted as a general scale. But the Table referred to by the hon. Member at least serves a useful purpose in proving that the applicability of the scale to Scotland is more than doubtful. The Tables appended to the Report are annually revised and re-cast as occasion requires; but it is doubtful whether an alteration in the scale adopted, which might give rise to erroneous inferences, would be expedient on the eve of a new Census.

CHINESE PIRATES.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has any information with regard to an attack made by pirates (who were on board the ship as passengers) on or about 1st December, 1890, on a steamer voyaging from Hong Kong to Swatow, in which a passenger named Petersen and the Captain (Captain Pocock) were killed, and property to the value of £5,000 was taken by the pirates, who escaped from the ship by boats; and what steps have been taken to bring the perpetrators of this outrage to punishment?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Since answering the question put by the hon. Member for East Grinstead on the 2nd of February, the Admiral on the Station has reported that he had sent two ships of war to visit certain places to the north and south of Hong Kong, where it was thought somo information might be obtained, but they totally failed to learn anything of value, and up to the 8th of January the pirates were still at large. Instructions are being sent to the Governor of Hong Kong to report what measures he proposes to take with a view to preventing the surreptitious embarkation of arms by Chinese passengers in future.

THE EVICTIONS AT SILKSWORTH.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that nearly 50 persons were wounded, some of them dangerously, and all of them but three with blows behind, in the recent baton-charge by the police at Silksworth; that respectable unoffending persons, both male and female, quietly walking home by the very side of the police, were struck and kicked by them; what time, if any, was allowed to these persons to get out of the way between the time when the police faced about and the charge was delivered; and whether, in view of the serious allegations publicly made against the police, and in view of the probable renewal of the evictions, with the consequent excitement, he is prepared to order a public inquiry into the matter? Is it the fact that none of these persons made or attempted any resistance whatsoever?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have received a Report from the Chief Constable and have also seen reports of newspapers of different shades of opinion concerning the conflict that unhappily occurred on February 25. Those reports do not bear out the allegations of the hon. Member. The Chief Constable informs me that some 30 persons were more or less injured, but none dangerously, and that only only one female, a little girl, was slightly hurt, having been (it is supposed) crushed by the crowd. It appears that the bailiffs were returning home, escorted by the police, when they and the police were assailed by a riotous crowd, chiefly, as I gather, from Sunderland, and not connected with the Silksworth mines. This crowd continued to shout and pelt the officers with stones and small rivets of iron from the shipyards, hitting many of them, until the superintendent in charge, an old and experienced officer, halted his party and loudly cautioned the mob to desist or he would be compelled to drive them away by force. No attention was paid to this warning; the police charged with drawn batons, and the crowd was dispersed. I am not prepared to say whether or not the police, after making this charge, kept within those bounds of moderation and self-defence which they ought to observe. I have, however, no information before me to show that serious allegations have been made publicly against them. I am informed that the hon. Member for Mid Durham and the miners' officials have openly praised the police for their forbearance in the performance of difficult duties in connection with this strike. The Chief Constable does not apprehend a renewal of excitement or disturbance. I would point out to the hon. Member that the police are reponsible to the Standing Joint Committee, and not to me; and that, if there has been misconduct or excessive violence on the part of the police, complaint should be made to the Local Authority, who will, I have no doubt, make whatever inquiry is necessary. I should be guilty of disrespect to them if I ordered a public inquiry without any evidence that they are not prepared to do their duty.

Mr. STOREY: Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to allege that respectable and unoffending persons, male and female, quietly walking home, by the very side of the police, were not struck and kicked. What time was allowed to these respectable people to get out of the way?

Mr. J. WILSON (Durham, Mid): Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to ask whether the term "praise" he has applied to the conduct of the police refers to their conduct during the evictions?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I stated, with as much accuracy as I could, that the praise was given to them for the manner in which they performed a difficult duty, and not in reference to any specific charge. With reference to the question of the hon. Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) I can give him no answer beyond that which I have already given, that I cannot find either in the Report of the Chief Constable, or in the reports of the newspapers submitted to me, any confirmation of the allegations he has made. I do not undertake to deny them; all I say is that I do not find any confirmation of them.

Sir W. LAWSON: May I ask if the right hon. Gentleman will make any further inquiry into the matter?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I think I have given an ample answer, and I would suggest that any further question should be addressed to those responsible for the conduct of the police.

Mr. STOREY: I beg to give notice that I shall take the earliest opportunity of bringing this serious matter before the House, and of placing the real facts of the case before the right hon. Gentleman.

USE OF SCHOOLROOMS FOR PUBLIC MEETINGS IN RURAL DISTRICTS.

Mr. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware of the difficulty which exists in villages and rural districts of obtaining suitable buildings for the purpose of holding public meetings, and whether he will consider the desirability of proposing or accepting legislation which shall secure

to the ratepayers of a district, under certain safeguards as to interference with educational purposes and injury to the buildings, the use of rooms in schools in receipt of Parliamentary grants for local public purposes?

Sir W. HART DYKE: I believe the difficulty, which at one time existed, has been largely diminished, partly owing to increase in the number of village halls available for the purpose which the hon. Member has in view, and partly owing to the general desire on the part of managers of schools to meet all reasonable requirements in this connection, and I do not, therefore, as at present advised, see any necessity for further legislation of the character suggested.

Mr. H. GARDNER: I beg to give notice that on the Education Vote I will call attention to this subject.

INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS.

Mr. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the present price of mineral spirit being some 50 per cent. above that of mineral oil, any practice of mixing the former with the latter is now impossible; and whether he is aware that the regulation as to tank depôts in Clause 6 of the Inflammable Liquids Bill would, in the cases of small shops, be found quite impracticable, as also that in Clause 10 (d) with respect to the isolation of such depôts?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am advised that the price of mineral spirit is in excess of that of mineral oil, though I cannot say whether it is so to the extent mentioned in the question. There is no provision in the Bill specially directed against the practice of mixing the spirit with the oil. My hon. Friend appears not to have read Clause 3 of the Bill, which contains no provision as to "tank depôts," as stated in the question. Clauses 2 and 3 are specially intended to protect small shops by enabling them to keep the stock usually stored in such shops without registration or license, and subject only to the restriction that the oil shall be kept in substantial closed metal vessels, a method of storage now largely employed and therefore not impracticable. Clause 10 (d) deals with licensed premises only, and lays down no fixed limits as to isolation of depôts. It merely expresses a power already possessed under the existing law by Local Authorities of prescribing in their licences conditions as to the situation of the premises.

MR. JOHN KELLY: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman, if he is aware that it is stated, at page 248 of the *Year Book of Commerce* for 1890-91, that, out of the total average annual numbers of fires in London during the four years ending 1889, namely, 2,209, only about two per cent., namely, 43, occurred in the shops of oil or colourmen; whether he is aware that the few fires which have occurred on the premises of wholesale dealers in petroleum oil have not been occasioned by petroleum oil, and that, in more than half the cases of such fires, although the premises and a large proportion of the stocks have been destroyed, the petroleum oil has not taken fire; and whether he has any, and, if so, what reason for doubting the accuracy of the figures given in the *Year Book of Commerce?*

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; I believe the figures quoted are substantially accurate. They appear to be based upon the Annual Reports of the Chief Officer of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade. I cannot admit the correctness of the statement in the second paragraph of the question. On the contrary, I am advised that some of the fires have been largely due to petroleum oil in their consequences and effects, and in some instances in their inception. I am further advised that it is not the fact that in such cases the oil has not taken fire, although in some instances there has been salvage of portions of the stock. It is the fact that petroleum oil has hitherto been generally supplied in substantially constructed barrels, but the practice of supplying it in tank wagons, from which the oil is conveyed into metal storage tanks, has rapidly increased, and already largely prevails in some districts. The storage in barrels is not a perfectly safe method, because the storage vessel has to be tapped for delivery. It is itself inflammable, it is liable to leak, and is much less safe than the metal tanks. I cannot express an opinion as to the relative danger arising from mineral oil as compared with turpentine, spirits of wine, and whisky, which must depend to a great extent on the conditions of storage, but the two latter articles can be mixed with and extinguished by water. The peculiar danger of mineral oil is that water does not extinguish it, and only helps to spread its devastating effects. Turpentine is not stored to anything like the same extent as mineral oil, and its much greater cost tends to secure more careful storage.

ARTIFICIAL MANURES AND FEEDING STUFFS.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture when the Bill which he has in preparation for the prevention of adulteration of artificial manures and feeding stuffs will be introduced and put down for Second Reading; and whether, having regard to the fact that the principle of the Artificial Manures, &c. (Adulteration) Bill, now before the House, has been accepted in the resolutions passed by all the Chambers of Agriculture which have up to this date considered that Bill, by the Chemical Manure Manufacturers' Association, by the Incorporated Oil Seed Association, and by other corporate bodies interested in this question, and has received the unanimous approval of the agricultural Press, he proposes to embody in his own Bill the principle thus approved?

MR. CHAPLIN: I do not think that I shall be able to introduce this Bill until after Easter. With regard to the Second Reading, the hon. Member must be aware that it is impossible for me to make any statements on that point at present. In reply to the second part of the question, I may say that I am in daily receipt of numerous communications on this subject, and they hardly lead me to the conclusion that the hon. Gentleman's Bill meets with the universal approval which he appears to suppose. I am, however, entirely in accord with the hon. Gentleman in the objects which he has in view, and I hope it may be possible to devise a measure which will be considered as acceptable by each of the two Parties who are so greatly interested in the question. With regard to the last question which the hon. Member has put to me, he will have ample opportunity of informing himself as to the principle of the Bill in question after it has been introduced and printed.

*MR. CHANNING: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of any agricultural body which has expressed anything but a general approval of this Bill?

*MR. CHAPLIN: In the communications which I have received some of the Agricultural Associations and Chambers have not expressed an entire approval of the Bill.

*MR. CHANNING: I beg to give notice that if the Bill of the right hon. Gentleman does not embody the principle of some sufficient guaranteed analysis with penalties for misrepresentation, I shall move, on the Second Reading of the Bill, that the Bill, together with my own, be referred to a Select Committee, and, if the necessity arises, I shall oppose the Second Reading of the Government measure.

EXPENDITURE UNDER THE NAVAL DEFENCE ACT, 1889.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what was the amount of the unexpended balance of the Dockyard and Store Votes of the year 1889-90 applicable to the Naval Defence Fund under "The Naval Defence Act, 1889"; and whether any portion of this has been expended in the year 1890-91?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The unexpended balance at the close of 1889-90 under the head of "New Construction under the Naval Defence Act of 1889," for which provision was made in the Navy Votes, was—for materials and contract work (Vote 8, Sections 1, 2, and 3), £174,243. No portion of this sum has been expended during the present financial year.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS BILL.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he proposes to proceed with his Factory and Workshops Bill in Standing Committee before the House is in possession of, or has read a second time, the Public Health (London) Law Amendment Bill and the Public Health (London) Law Consolidation Bill, to be introduced by the President of the Local Government Board; and whether he

proposes to proceed with the Factory Bill before the Easter Recess?

MR. MATTHEWS: I hope to proceed with the Factory Bill before the Easter Recess, and I have every reason to expect that the Public Health (London) Law Amendment Bill will be in the possession of the House before much progress can be made with the Factory Bill.

ARMY CONTRACTS.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the three years' contract for repairing barracks, fortifications, sea fronts, building stores, guardrooms, barrack officers' quarters, &c., comes to an end on the 31st March next; and what steps the Department intends to take, in reference to the new contract, to carry out the Resolution adopted by the House on 13th February in regard to the sub-letting of Government contracts and payment of fair wages?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The answer to the first question is "Yes." I have already approved a Circular, which will be issued to contractors, which lays down rules as to sub-letting and as to wages, in full accordance with the terms of the Resolution adopted by the House of Commons.

THE BUDGET.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he intends to introduce the Budget before the Easter Recess?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I think not, Sir. I think it is very improbable.

VESSELS BUILT FOR FOREIGNERS.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Lanark): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether, in the case of vessels built in the United Kingdom to the order and delivery of foreigners, their values are not included in the Board of Trade Export Returns; and whether, seeing such vessels are built and equipped by material and labour, the product of this country, and thus form an essential part of export trade, he will consider the propriety of including such vessels in the Returns, or at least of appending their value to the Returns?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: No, Sir. The values referred by the hon. Member are not at present included in the Trade Returns; but the question of appending a statement of the values of such vessels has been for some time under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. In the event of its being decided to obtain this information, legislation would probably be necessary.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOP INSPECTORS.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Hame Department whether he has taken, or will take, any steps in conjunction with the Treasury to increase the present staff of Factory and Workshop Inspectors?

MR. MATTHEWS: I shall await the result of the legislative proposals now before Parliament before I decide whether any, and if, so what, increase of the existing staff may become necessary.

PUBLIC CEMETERY AT HYDE.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board with reference to the proposed arrangement for the provision of a public cemetery at Hyde, whether, in the event of a portion of the cemetery being consecrated, the Bishop of the Diocese would have the right to insist upon a separate chapel being built, at the expense of the rates, for the Episcopalians, in the consecrated portion of the cemetery; whether he would have control over all monuments and inscriptions in that portion of the cemetery; and whether he would have the right of appointing a chaplain to be paid for by the Corporation at a salary to be approved by him?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I do not understand that in the case of the Hyde cemetery, to which the hon. Member refers, any difference arises with regard to the provision of a separate chapel for the Episcopalians. The proposal that was submitted at the inquiry was that three chapels should be erected—one for the Church of England, one for Nonconformists, and one for Roman Catholics. As regards the question of control over monuments and inscriptions in the cemetery, the arrangement which I am informed was proposed on behalf of the Established Church was that the monuments should be under the control of the Town Council, the Council being responsible for all inscriptions being of a proper character. The right of appointing the chaplain would not, as suggested, devolve on the Bishop, but would be vested on the Town Council. The appointment and salary, however, would require the approval of the Bishop, but in order to meet objections to this requirement, the offer which, as I understand, was made to the Town Council, was that the stipend so fixed and approved should be a nominal one only, say £1 per annum, and that this salary should be deducted by the Town Council from the fees payable to the chaplain.

BUXTON LIME COMPANY.

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I beg to ask the Attorney General, whether his attention has been called to the case of "Frances Bennett *v.* The Buxton Lime Company," in the County Court, New Mills, Derbyshire, reported in the *Sheffield Independent* of 14th February, in which the County Court Judge is reported to have held that the company was justified in dismissing the plaintiff without notice by reason of his having taken part in an agitation for higher wages, although the rules of the company provided for a month's notice in writing; and whether it is the law that a workman forfeits his contract rights by taking part in strike or other agitations?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I am informed by the learned County Court Judge that the report in the *Sheffield Independent* to which the hon. Member refers is altogether inaccurate. He informs me that it was clearly proved at the trial that it has been the invariable practice, for at least 30 years, for both masters and men alike to determine their contract by giving a month's verbal notice. The plaintiff had received such a notice, but neither at the time of his dismissal nor after he had left did he raise any objection that the notice was not in writing.

COUNTS OUT.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the many recent cases of the House having been counted out on private Members' nights, the Government will take into consideration the expediency of proposing a change in the Standing Orders whereby the House, on such occasions, would be enabled to pass to the next business on the Paper instead of standing adjourned?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The counts out to which the hon. Member alludes were, I am afraid, attributable to a disinclination on the part of the House to take any further business, and I do not think the proposal of the hon. Member would be of any use in meeting such a state of things, nor, should an alteration of the Standing Orders of the House be lightly undertaken, even if it were possible to find the time for the necessary discussion.

MARRIAGES IN INDIA.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the great excitement and apprehension which has been caused in India by the introduction into the Governor General's Council, by Sir Andrew Scoble, of a Bill fixing the age of consent, in the case of married girls, at 12 years; whether he is aware that puberty very frequently takes place in Indian females before the age of 12 years, while there is no system of registration of births, and consequently no certitude as to the real age of the great majority of the population; whether he is aware that strong resolutions have been passed at mass meetings throughout the Indian Empire protesting against the Bill on the grounds that the European officials responsible for it are ignorant of the injurious effects which it will produce in the social and domestic life of the people, that it will lead to the ruin of innocent families by the fabrication of false charges and put a premium on oppression and extortion by subordinate officials, and declaring that it is a direct interference with native religion and usage, and a clear infringement of the Queen's Proclamation of 1858; whether it is the case, as stated in the Indian Press, that this Bill has been brought in at the request of Her Majesty's Government, in consequence of a single case of brutality by a bridegroom having occurred during the last 30 years; and whether the Government of India will now be advised to withdraw a measure which is viewed with the gravest apprehensions by large masses of the Indian people?

MR. PICTON (Leicester): Before the question is answered I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware or if he has seen a memorandum addressed to the Governor General by 55 lady physicians in reference to a large number of cases which have come within their own experience, in which they declare in the strongest terms against these marriages?

MR. S. SMITH: I wish to supplement the questions which have just been asked by another, namely, whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the most intelligent class of Hindoos, and nearly all the Mahommedans, are in favour of raising the age to 12 years?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I have been requested by my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India to reply to this question. The Bill in question was introduced by the Government of India, with a full knowledge of the facts of the case and after very careful consideration. There is no intention of withdrawing it. In regard to the questions of the hon. Member for Leicester (Mr. Picton) and the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith), I am not in a position to answer them, and if further information is required notice had better be given.

MR. KEAY: Will the right hon. Gentleman kindly answer the 3rd and 4th paragraphs of the question.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I think the answer I have given covers the whole of the question. It is impossible to enter into details.

MAGAZINE RIFLES FOR INDIA.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the cost of magazine rifles made by contract is correctly stated in the letter from the War Office to the Under Secretary for India, dated 27th June, 1890, namely—

"The full price of the rifle is £5 12s. 6d., made up as follows: contract price, £5 9s.; butt and fore end (supplied to the contractors free by the War Office), 10½d. and 1s. 7½d. respectively; cost of extra view of certain components by War Office during manufacture of rifle, 1s.; total, £5 12s. 6d. (Note.—The original contract price was £5 10s., it was reduced to £5 9s. on account of extra view.) Accordingly, the total price payable by you for each rifle is £5 12s. 6d., as follows: to the Company, £2 14s. 6d.; to the War Office, £2 18s.; total, £5 12s. 6d;"

whether the contract price for bayonets and scabbards is 13s. and 2s. 2½d. respectively; and what is the estimated cost of bayonets and scabbards made in the Government factories?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The prices at that time are accurately stated in the Question; but since the letter in which they occur was written, some small savings have been effected as regards parts of the magazine rifle. The last balance sheet of the Ordnance Factories shows the cost of sword bayonets as 12s., and of scabbards as 3s. 8d., but it is believed that the two together are now made for about 14s. 3d.

COST OF CIVIL JUSTICE IN INDIA.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State has yet ascertained whether any Papers relating to the cost of civil justice in India can usefully be published; and if the Inquiry promised in June 1890 has resulted in the finding of such Papers, whether they will be placed in the hands of hon. Members?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON (for Sir J. GORST): I presume that the hon. Member refers to an answer given to the late Mr. Bradlaugh in July last. I can only repeat, in answer to the present question, the information given to Mr. Bradlaugh in a letter from the India Office in December last, namely, that the whole subject of the Bengal Judicial Establishments is under consideration; that the proposals of the Government of India have not yet been submitted to the Secretary of State in Council; and that, therefore, the correspondence is not in a state to be presented as a Parliamentary Return.

MR. CONYBEARE: Can the right hon. Gentleman say whether definite information may be shortly expected?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No, Sir, I am unable to say.

BOMBAY SALT ACT.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the Secretary of State will direct the Government of Bombay to so amend the new Bombay Salt Act that it shall not be possible for such acts as the boiling of water containing salt, duly purchased, accidentally spilled therein, or the boiling down of dirty salt, bought openly in the bazaar, to purify it, to be described as the "manufacture" of salt, rendering parties doing these things liable to punishment; (2) whether a recent judgment of the High Court of Bombay, while holding the punishment inflicted for the offences described above was excessive, and that the sentences should be nominal only, yet held that they were offences under the Act, punishable with fine and imprisonment; (3) whether, in legislation relating to the Government salt monopoly in India prior to the Bombay Act of 1890, similar provisions were contained; and (4) whether in other parts of the Empire Salt Acts contain like clauses; and, if not, why such provisions should be required for Bombay?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON (for Sir J. GORST): The attention of the Government of Bombay has been called to the subject by the questions which have been asked in this House. The Secretary of State does not consider it necessary to issue the directions suggested. The answer to the second paragraph of the question is—yes. The answer to the third paragraph is that the provisions of the present Bombay Act for the protection of the Salt Revenue are more precise than those contained in the former Act; and the answer to the fourth paragraph is—yes.

MR. CONYBEARE: I am not quite satisfied by the answer of the right hon. Gentleman whether any steps are being taken by the Indian Government to prevent the evils complained of.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I believe the Secretary of State considers that the law as it is administered is satisfactory.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION IN IRELAND.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to postpone until Monday the question of which I have given notice to ask the Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any grants were made towards technical instruction in Ireland during the year 1890 under the Technical Instruction Act of 1889; if so, for what particular branches of such instruction these grants were made, and what was the total amount in each branch; whether any steps have been taken to bring the facilities thus offered under the notice of those in Ireland for whom they were intended; if so, of what nature; if no such steps have been taken whether he will see what can be done in this direction; what was the total amount of grants for handicrafts or manual instruction in national schools in Ireland during the year 1890; and how many schools shared in these grants?

THE BALLYSHANNON UNION.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Guardians of the Ballyshannon Union have this year accepted a tender for printing and advertising largely in excess of the amount which a competent local contractor offered to do the work for; and if the Local Government Board has had its attention drawn to this waste of the rates in a Union for which relief works are being claimed?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I believe that the fact stated in the question is correct. The matter came at the time before the Local Government Board, who sent a warning to the Guardians.

WEST DONEGAL MAILS.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he is aware that the mails for the entire West Donegal district are delayed at Strabane for four hours, although a train starts from Strabane to Donegal after the arrival of the mail train at Strabane; what is the reason of this delay; and whether he will take steps for the speedy transmission of the mails from Strabane to Donegal?

*MR. RAIKES: The mails leaving Dublin in the morning for West Donegal are at present subject to the delay complained of, because the Department has not yet been able to arrange for the use of the train to which the hon. Member refers. I hope, however, that the matter may soon be satisfactorily adjusted.

IRISH RELIEF WORKS.

MR. DEASY (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that a large number of men in the Westport Union have been refused employment on the relief works; and, if so, whether he will give directions that all deserving applicants shall be engaged?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Every effort is made to secure that persons in absolute need of relief, and that they alone, are employed upon relief works. The employment lists are revised from time to time, and the cases of all applicants receive careful consideration.

MR. THEODORE FRY (Darlington): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he has come to any conclusion in reference to the extension of the railway from Loughrea to Woodford, which has been brought before his notice by memorial and deputation from the district, and which would not only provide work but be a great permanent boon to that isolated district? I also beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he is aware that only a small proportion of the men on Achill Island have been given relief work, and if it is his intention to increase the number so employed, or to distribute assistance in other ways, they and their families being on the verge of starvation; and, if it be true that only about one-fourth of the needful quantity of seed potatoes have been applied for, that a good many of these have been found to be rotten, and that, in many cases, the good ones are being consumed for food; and, if so, whether he can take any steps to remedy this state of things?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There are four relief works in Achill Island, giving employment on February 28th to 317 persons. Should it be deemed necessary to open further relief works on the Island, or to afford employment to a larger number of persons, the matter will, of course, be carefully considered. The Poor Law Guardians of Westport Union estimated that the quantity of seed potatoes required for Achill Electoral Division would be 58 tons 18 cwt., and that the number of occupiers requiring seed would be 172, giving an average of about 6 2-3cwt. of seed potatoes to each occupier. The Inspectors are satisfied, after making careful inquiries, that the seed is good, with the exception of some damaged bags which have not been distributed.

Mr. THEODORE FRY: Does the right hon. Gentleman intend to take any steps to ascertain the need for relief?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: That is not so easy a matter as the hon. Gentleman seems to imagine. I am carefully watching in order to see whether it is necessary to set additional relief works going.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the distress prevailing among the numerous small farmers in the Kiltullagh and Ballinlough Electoral Divisions of the Castlerea Union, county Roscommon; and, whether the poor people of that district may hope for some mitigation of their suffering by the opening of relief works on an early day?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The position of this Union is engaging the attention of the Government.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the acute distress in Ranafushe, Loughanoran, and Ranamona, in Anagany district, county Donegal; whether he is aware that in these localities fever prevails, deaths are extraordinarily numerous, 875 people are left without potatoes or other food, credit is exhausted, debts amount to an average of about £10 per family, and the inquiry by the police many weeks ago has only resulted in assistance being given to 2 per cent. of the famishing population; and whether the Government will adopt prompt measures for the saving of life by affording immediate employment in the neighbourhood?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The West Coast of Donegal has caused considerable anxiety to the Government, and its condition is being carefully watched. It has not, so far, been found necessary to start relief works in the district of Anagry.

Mr. DALTON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the description of the state of Lower Templecrone, County Donegal, contained in a letter to the *Derry Journal* of the 27th February and signed "J. O'Donnell, Ranafast," is substantially accurate; whether the Reports of the police show that there is great want and destitution in the Electoral Division of Anagry, particularly Ranafast; whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the Report of his Inspector concerning these districts; and whether he can give any assurance that steps will be taken to meet the great distress in this locality?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: It is the case that there is poverty among the helpless families in Lower Templecrone. Their cases are under consideration.

POST OFFICE CLEARING HOUSE, DUBLIN.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the seven hours rule in the Savings Bank Department in London will apply to women employed in the Clearing House branch, Dublin; and whether, in view of the fact that women employed in the former Department in London receive a minimum salary of £100, whilst those employed in the latter in Dublin receive only £70, any arrangements are in contemplation to bring the rules of payment more nearly to an equality?

*Mr. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that I have not yet come to any decision on the subject alluded to in the question.

IRISH CONSTABULARY FORCE FUND.

Sir THOMAS ESMONDE (Dublin County, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can explain why, although the subscribers to the Constabulary Force Fund have repeatedly pressed for an account of the income and expenditure of that fund, no such account has ever been rendered; what was the amount of the Force Fund in 1863, and what it amounts to now; and whether the authorities have any objection to a public audit of this public fund as requested by the Petition of the pensioners presented to this House in 1888?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The hon. Member appears to be under a misapprehension in supposing that any general desire has been expressed by the subscribers to the Constabulary Force Fund for the rendering to them an account of the fund. Some memorials from pensioners were received by the Constabulary Authorities on the subject, but on investigation it was found that fully one-half of the memorialists were not subscribers to the fund, and had no pecuniary interest in it. There were no accumulations in this fund in 1863. The present accumulated fund dates from the Constabulary Act of 1866, and now amounts to £146,000; but, as explained in reply to former questions, this falls far short of the sum required to meet the benefits promised by the Government to contributors, and to secure those benefits the Government are about to ask Parliament to give a sum of £150,000 to be added to the present capital of the fund. The fund is regularly audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

BELFAST TRAMWAY LINES.

MR. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been drawn to a serious collision in Donegall Street, Belfast, between a tramcar and another vehicle at the narrow part of the street where the provisions of the Act of Parliament had been infringed in the laying of the tram lines, and, as loss of life had quite recently taken place at the same point, would he impress upon the Local Authority the necessity for securing greater safety for the ordinary traffic of the city at this and other equally dangerous points?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The only collision between a tramcar in Belfast and another vehicle, which has come under the notice of the police, occurred in Royal Avenue. The matter subsequently came before the Recorder on appeal, who acquitted the tramway officials of all blame. The other case to which my hon. Friend refers is probably that of a schoolboy, who was run over by a passing tramcar when jumping off the foot of another tramcar, on which he had been riding surreptitiously. The coroner's jury found the death to be accidental. I have no doubt the Local Authority give due attention to all such cases that come before them.

THE PAWNBROKING TRADE IN BELFAST.

MR. DE COBAIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been drawn to the fact that some persons engaged in the pawnbroking trade in Belfast had adopted the practice of discounting Army Pension Papers, though such Papers distinctly indicated the illegality of such a course; and whether he would give instructions to the Royal Irish Constabulary to test the validity of these charges, and to take such steps against those who might be found guilty of the offence as would check the recurrence of such a practice?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that some pawnbrokers in Belfast have adopted the practice referred to in the question. The police have made efforts to obtain sufficient grounds for a prosecution, but hitherto without success. I shall, however, consider what further steps should be taken.

LOANS TO IRISH TOWN COMMISSIONERS.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of the Treasury whether the Treasury refuse to allow loans to Town Commissioners in Ireland for public improvements to be made on the same terms, namely, the repayment of principal and interest by an annuity, as loans to landlords and farmers for private improvements; and, if so, for what reason?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Loans to landlords and farmers are made under a special Act of Parliament which prescribe the terms of repayment. Loans to Town Commissioners are made under an entirely different principle, and I see no reason why the two should be assimilated.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE (COUNTY CAVAN).

MR. KNOX: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether the Government will consent to the Motion for a Return, Justices of the Peace (County Cavan), which is on the Paper for this day?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): It would be contrary to precedent to give all the details asked for in this Return, but there is no objection to give a Return of the names and occupations of the Magistrates; and a Return of the Magistrates who attend Petty Sessions may be added if required.

MR. KNOX: Why does the right hon. Gentleman refuse to give the rateable value?

MR. MADDEN: It would be contrary to precedent.

BELFAST PRISON.

MR. SEXTON (Belfast, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what has been the result of the Conference between the Irish Government and the Irish Prisons Board, concerning the unanimous protest of the Corporation of Belfast against the projected alterations of Her Majesty's Prison at Belfast, upon the several grounds that they would create an eyesore, destroy the frontage line, and deteriorate the value of property in the district?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have suggested that there shall be a Joint Committee or some analogous body, and in the deliberation of which representatives, both of the Corporation and the Prison Board, shall take part to consider this difficult question. I am in hopes that this plan may lead to a satisfactory settlement of the matter.

THE FOUR COURTS, DUBLIN.

MR. DE COBAIN: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether he is aware that complaints have been made by suitors and the public generally in regard to the delay on the part of the officials of the different Courts connected with the Four Courts, Dublin, in making up the orders and decrees given by the different Judges, almost a month, and sometimes even two months, elapsing in getting out the order; whether the different Law Societies have repeatedly complained of such delays; and, whether, in view of the fact that the hours of attendance at the Four Courts are from 11.30 to 3.30, whereas in London the Judges sit from 10.30 to 4.30, some steps will be taken at an early date to ensure the greater despatch of business at these Courts, in the interest of the professional gentlemen practising there and of the public at large?

MR. MADDEN: I am not able to accept the statements of fact contained in the question of my hon. Friend, either as to the hours of attendance at the Four Courts, or as to the existence of repeated complaints of delay on the part of the officials of this Court. As regards the Common Law Divisions I find that no complaints have been made on the score of delay, and that orders are issued within a day or two after they have been made by the Judges. As regards the Chancery Division the matter appears to have been brought before the Lord Chancellor by the Council of the Incorporated Law Society in November, 1890, and is referred to in their last Report, from which it would appear that their complaints are directed rather against the course of procedure in this division than against the action of the officials of the Courts. I am informed that no complaints have been made since that date. From the nature of orders in the Chancery Division, it would be impossible to have them drawn up and issued as rapidly as the ordinary run of Common Law Orders, and I have no reason to believe that suitors have any just ground of complaint on the score of delay.

CASTLE ISLAND, CORK.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland can he state the cost of keeping three policemen on Castle Island, adjacent to Schull, County Cork; and if the rent is annually £96?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that no additional cost is incurred in the matter referred to. The landlord provides house accommodation and other requisites free of charge.

MISS QUANE.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with reference to the case of Miss Quane, who has been sent to gaol in Tipperary on the charge of "hooting the police," would he explain in what the alleged crime consisted, and under what law it is punishable; upon what evidence was Miss Quane convicted; and by whom was the sentence imposed upon her?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The woman referred to was summoned at the time for being one of a disorderly crowd which stoned the police in December, 1889.

She did not obey the summons. A warrant was thereupon issued, but she evaded arrest until the 23rd ult. She was brought up before a Court of ordinary Petty Sessions, the Bench consisting of five Magistrates. The evidence of the police was uncontradicted. The Magistrates ordered the woman to find bail to keep the peace, and to be of good behaviour. This she refused to do, electing to go to prison in default. The committing Justices, however, subsequently recommended the case to the clemency of the Lord Lieutenant, on the ground that the offence was committed so long ago. The woman has accordingly been released from custody.

MORTGAGES ON IRISH AGRICULTURAL LAND.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has any statistics showing the amount of interest requisite to pay the mortgages existing on Irish agricultural land, the average rate of interest charged for these mortgages, and the amount of the annuities charged on agricultural land in Ireland which are paid by the owners of the land; and, if so, whether he can present this information to the House?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I have no information which would enable me to answer this question.

THE LARNE AND STRANRAER ROUTE.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what is the result of the consideration given by the Treasury to the proposals of the Postmaster General respecting the Larne and Stranraer route?

Mr. JACKSON: No, Sir; no decision has been arrived at, but the matter is under consideration.

AMERICAN LARDS.

Mr. SEXTON: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether after the evidence that has been given at the hearing of the recent prosecutions against Messrs. Topping and Walkington, Belfast, concerning the misleading description that is branded upon American lard, to the effect that such lard is sold in England as Irish, the Attorney General for England will direct the police to enforce in Bristol, and in the other English towns in which this lard is sold, the provisions of "The Merchandise Marks Act, 1887?"

Sir R. WEBSTER: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will allow me to answer this question. I have not seen the evidence, but I will communicate with the Attorney General for Ireland, and if I find that the evidence is sufficient to warrant a prosecution I will take that step.

DEPREDATIONS BY FRENCH FISHERMEN.

Mr. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that numerous complaints have been made by the fishermen engaged in the fisheries off Castletown, Berehaven, of constant attacks and depredations committed on them and their property by French fishermen cruising in large luggers; and whether the Admiralty, in view of the fact that the mackerel fishing season is now at hand, will despatch two or three well-fitted cruisers to protect the interests of the fishermen so attacked?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: I have not heard of any complaints made by the fishermen in the neighbourhood of Castletown, Berehaven, of depredations by French fishermen. There are at present two sailing cruisers at Bantry, and they will shortly be re-inforced by a steam cruiser. The services of all these vessels will be available, if required, to maintain order.

THE SCOMBER AND MACKEREL FISHING SYNDICATE.

Mr. FLYNN: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether information has reached him that the agents and *employés* of "The Scomber and Mackerel Fishing Syndicate" are in the habit of molesting parties suspected of buying fish from vessels fishing off the South-Western Coast of Ireland; and, if so, under what authority they interfere with persons engaged in their lawful calling?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: No Report on this subject has been received, either by the Admiralty or by the Irish Government.

MR. SAMUEL JAGOE, J.P.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that Mr. Samuel Jagoe, J.P., at the Petty Sessions held at Ballydehob, County Cork, 16th January last, adjudicated in a case in which he had himself been examined as a witness, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Mr. Notter, J.P.; whether complaints have reached him that the deafness of Mr. Jagoe, who, though about 75 years old, has been only recently appointed to the Magistracy, is a serious inconvenience to the litigants; and whether it is intended to take any action in the matter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that, previous to the hearing of the case, the gentleman mentioned had been sitting as a Magistrate on the Bench; and, after giving evidence, he resumed his seat there. He has, however, assured the Lord Chancellor that he had no intention of taking part in the adjudication, and that, in fact, when the case was called on, he stated in open Court that he would not adjudicate upon it. No allegation, either as to deafness or as to inconvenience to litigants, has been made to the Lord Chancellor in reference to this gentleman.

CHARGE AGAINST AN IRISH POLICE CONSTABLE.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that a police constable named Connell, stationed at Schull, County Cork, deliberately loaded his rifle in the presence of a large assemblage of people returning from a meeting which was addressed by Mr. William O'Brien, M.P.; whether he is also aware that Connell, with another police constable, followed Mr. William O'Brien from Schull to Bantry, carrying a loaded rifle in his hand; and whether police constables, when following Irish Members of Parliament, are ordered to carry loaded firearms?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to put down the question for a later day.

PRIVATE BILL FEES.

SIR J. GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the fees paid to the Houses of Commons and Lords by promoters of Private Bills bring in a considerable Revenue to the Treasury; if so, what the amount was last year; and further, whether he will consider the advisability of proposing to the House a reduction of the present scale?

*MR. JACKSON: I am informed that the fees received on Private Bills in the House of Commons during the financial year 1889-90 amounted to about £24,800. The fees received in the House of Lords were probably about the same amount. It is not in contemplation to make any reduction in the present scale of fees.

*SIR J. GOLDSMID: What is the balance of profit to the Treasury on these fees?

*MR. JACKSON: It would be rather difficult to state accurately.

*SIR J. GOLDSMID: Does the First Lord of the Treasury think it right that the expenses of the House of Commons should be paid by the promoters of Private Bills?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am afraid that the answer to that question requires consideration; but I do not think that Private Bill promoters are the most necessitous and deserving class of the community.

ROMAN CATHOLIC DISABILITIES.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government will consider the advisability of referring to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council the determination of the question whether Roman Catholics are or are not eligible to hold the offices of Lord Chancellor of England and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in the same manner in which it is proposed to take the opinion of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council with regard to the state of the Marriage Law in Malta?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Government are not prepared to adopt the course suggested by the hon. Member.

TELEGRAPHIC COMMUNICATION WITH SOUTH AMERICA.

MR. OCTAVIUS V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he is aware that the submarine telegraph communications on the West Coast of South America from Valparaiso running North are in the control of a United States Company domiciled in New York, and the land line (the Trans-

Andean) from Valparaiso to Buenos Ayres is owned by a Chile Argentine Company, domiciled in Valparaiso; whether the Despatches recently received from the British Admiral commanding the Squadron on the West Coast of South America and from the British Minister in Chile reached London by either of these routes, and whether these Despatches are in cypher or in ordinary language; and if Her Majesty's Government will use their influence with the Government of Chile to permit commercial messages to come freely?

Sir J. FERGUSSON: Part of the Northern line is in the hands of an English Company, part of an American, the line to Buenos Ayres in those of a local company. The Despatches received from Her Majesty's Minister could only come by one of these routes; they were in cypher; some from the Naval Commander-in-Chief were sent from ports in Peru. Chile is not a member of the Telegraph Union, and is therefore unrestricted as regards telegraph communications; but even if she were, the Convention provides for the stoppage of private messages in code or cypher when it is considered to be contrary to the interests of the State that they should be sent. In these circumstances, Her Majesty's Government do not feel that they can at present make any representations on the subject to the Chilian Government.

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY.

Sir HORACE DAVEY (Stockton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have received from the British South Africa Company a Minute or Memorandum of the terms upon which they are prepared, in the event of their obtaining possession of the territory claimed by the Mozambique Company, to confirm the grants and concessions made by that company; and, if so, what is the effect of it; whether it is the fact that the British South Africa Company cannot, by their charter, acquire powers of administration over any territory by Treaty without the approval of the Secretary of State; and whether the Secretary of State will make it a condition of his approval of the acquisition by the British South Africa Company of powers of government and administration over Manicaland by any Treaty that the British South Africa Company respect, and confirm all grants and concessions made by the Mozambique Company in favour of or now vested in British subjects?

Mr. Octavius V. Morgan

Sir J. FERGUSSON: No such Minute or Memorandum has been received as is mentioned in the first paragraph. The British South Africa Company can acquire powers of administration by agreement, but they cannot exercise them without the approval of the Secretary of State. Whatever may be the arrangements made or sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government with regard to Manica, the lawfully acquired rights of individuals and companies will receive every consideration.

LODGING HOUSE KEEPERS.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.) (on behalf of Lord Henry Bruce): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the statement is correct that lodging house keepers have been charged 9d. in the £1 as formerly; and, if so, what steps he proposes to take in order that the amount in excess should be refunded?

Mr. GOSCHEN: In order to obtain the concession granted by the Act of last Session, lodging house keepers were required to have their names registered before July 1 last, a date subsequently extended to August 31, in order that ample notice might be given of the requirements of the law. It would be impossible to make any concession now in favour of those who, under these circumstances, failed to comply with the conditions demanded by the law. But, of course, they will be able to secure the benefits of the lower charge in future by registering themselves each year within the proper time.

DISTRESS IN DONEGAL.

Mr. HARRISON (Tipperary, Mid) (on behalf of Mr. Dalton): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that there is acute distress in the parish of Gartan, County Donegal; and, whether he intends to take any steps to alleviate it?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The condition of the locality mentioned is receiving the careful attention of the Government.

METROPOLITAN WATER BILLS.

MR. HERMON-HODGE (Lancashire, Accrington): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board a question of which I have given him private notice. It is whether, considering the misapprehension that exists, he can inform the House what *locus standi* the County Councils will have to appear before the Select Committee appointed to consider the Metropolitan Water Bill?

*MR. RITCHIE: The Water Bills have been referred to a Hybrid Committee with instructions to hear petitioners. There is no question of *locus* in the matter, and indeed the County Councils will have the right to appear. I understand that Petitions were presented yesterday against each Bill.

THE EASTER HOLIDAYS.

MR. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether there is any truth in what has appeared in the newspapers with regard to the duration of the Easter Holidays?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir; no decision has been come to on the subject.

RAILWAY RATES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS.

SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is the fact that Saturday next is the last day for the presentation of Petitions against the Railway Rates Provisional Order Bills, and whether the right hon. Gentleman will state the intentions of the Government in reference to enlarging the period?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I do not know whether Saturday is the latest day for the presentation of Petitions, but, if it is, I propose to ask the House to pass some Resolution like that it has passed with reference to the Water Bill, allowing all petitioners to be heard who apply five clear days before the opening of the Committee.

SENTRIES IN LONDON.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many soldiers of the Foot Guards are now stationed in London, and how many of these each day are not available for drill or other purposes of military training, from the cause of either going on or coming off guard; and whether the present posts of sentries on the public buildings of London have been selected for military or for political reasons?

MR. E. STANHOPE: There are at present 2,449 non-commissioned officers and men of the Foot Guards stationed in London, of whom 324 are detailed for guard duties. The sentries at public buildings are not posted for purely military purposes.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): May I ask whether there is any intention on the part of the Government to attempt to proceed to-night with the Electors' Registration (Acceleration) Bill.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Only with the consent of the House.

MR. H. GARDNER: Is it intended to proceed with the Bill before Easter?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It cannot take precedence of Supply or other urgent Public Business. It is for hon. Members themselves to say whether it should be taken after 12 o'clock.

MR. J. MORLEY: What is to be the business next week?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Supply.

MR. J. MORLEY: What Supply?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not able to say positively. We shall go on with the Supplementary Estimates until they are concluded.

PRIVILEGE—MR. ATKINSON AND THE *DAILY NEWS.*

MR. ATKINSON (Boston): I wish, Mr. Speaker, to raise a question of Privilege. I desire to call the attention of the House to the fact that I, as a Member of this House, was libelled yesterday by the chief editor or someone in the office of a daily print called the *Daily News.* I am told that it is a paper printed for the use of Gladstonians, and is read by them; but some of my friends may read the paper too, and, as it imputes to me dishonourable conduct as a Member of the House, I think you will admit that it may impute the same conduct to any other Member of this House to-morrow. The libel is as follows:—

"At a late hour on Monday night Mr. Atkinson moved the House into Committee on his Marriage of Nonconformists (Attendance of Registrars) Bill. This was contrary to an understanding that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. The only way out of the difficulty in which the House now finds itself is that the Bill shall pass through Committee *pro formâ*, to be re-committed to a Select Committee, and that course will probably be taken."

I do not often read that paper, but yesterday morning some kind friend sent it to me. I immediately wrote to the editor, and sent a special messenger with the letter. I quoted the words that he had printed, and then I said that what he had stated was a falsehood. I said also that I should be very glad if he would inform his informants of this, as, though they seemed to know so much of what was going on in the House, their information was quite worthless, and worse than worthless. Then I wound up most politely by saying that, although I was a political opponent, I always fought fairly, if as strongly as I could, and I hoped that if in future he dealt with me again he would try to deal with me fairly. I also said that the bearer would wait for a reply. The bearer came back and said there was no reply. So I thought that perhaps the editor did not like my note, and I would wait to see it in print. I have turned the paper over this morning in every direction, but there is nothing of my letter in the paper. If a man tells a falsehood, wittingly or unwittingly, when he is told that it is a falsehood it is his duty to confess it, and it was the editor's duty to give me an opportunity of contradicting the falsehood. I now say that when on Monday I came to the House to do my duty I did not know that I was entitled to take the Committee stage of my Bill, but I was informed of the fact by friends. I have consistently declined to go to a Select Committee, because I have been obstructed in that way for six years, and because I do not want to be obstructed again. After having obtained the Committee stage in the most regular manner, after consulting the clerks at the Table, my friends in the House and other hon. Members on the other side, whom I told in, I hope, a straightforward and gentlemanly manner what I was going to do —after doing all this it is hard to be held up as a man who had taken advantage of the House by taking a stage when those hon. Members who desired to get home early had gone away. If I would do a thing of that kind I am not fit to sit in this House, either on this side or on that side. I wish, Mr. Speaker, to move that the editor be brought here to the bar of the House and made to apologise. If I had told a falsehood to anyone I would apologise, and I think the editor ought to. My right hon. Friend the leader of the House will now regret that he did not help me to carry my measure to make people sign their names to the leaders they write because now we should know who wrote this libel, and in future we should be able to regard that person as one who has told a falsehood. Under these circumstances, I put myself in the hands of the House, not as Mr. Atkinson, because what I say and do has nothing to do with it, but as a Member of Parliament engaged in the performance of his constitutional duties, and who was actually legislating by your favour at the time, and was doing his duty to his constituents and pushing a Bill which has been obstructed persistently for six years by those who ought to have helped it forward. The Attorney General will confirm what I say, that on that very night I was appealed to by one of my right hon. Friends—before the Attorney General jumped up—to go into a Select Committee, and I said "No, I would not," for I could not agree to it. Therefore, under such circumstances, I ask Mr. Speaker, and I ask the House generally, to be good enough to protect the privileges not only of myself, but of the other 699 Members at all events.

*(4.48.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I trust my hon. Friend will be satisfied with the statement which he has made to the House. Undoubtedly, it is a painful matter for him to be accused of dishonourable conduct in a newspaper of considerable position; but I am sure greater experience and knowledge of the practice of Parliament and of the reports, which are usually so very accurate, of proceedings in this House will induce him to overlook what I believe to be a mistake and not a wilful misrepresentation on the part of the journal in question; and to accept the assurance which I give him that I distinctly understood he refused to allow this Bill to be referred to a Select Committee, and that the course

he took on the occasion in question was one which he was entitled to take, and certainly was not in derogation of his duties as a Member of Parliament.

MOTION.

CONDUCT OF THE POLICE AT SILKSWORTH.

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. Storey, Member for Sunderland, rose in his place, and asked leave to move the Adjournment of the House, for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance, namely, "the illegal and unjustifiable conduct of the police during the recent evictions at Silksworth, near Sunderland, and particularly on Wednesday, the 25th February, 1891"; but the pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. Speaker called on those Members who supported the Motion to rise in their places, and not less than 40 Members having accordingly risen:—

(4.50.) Mr. STOREY: The circumstances I will venture to bring before the House took place within two miles of my own home, and the victims of the police were mainly constituents of my own. The right hon. Gentleman just now suggested to me that it was possible for the Joint Standing Committee of the County Council and the Magistrates of Durham to make an inquiry into this matter. I fully grant that that is so, but I would venture to point out to him that that is not sufficient under the circumstances which I shall be able to lay before the House. The precise facts as to the County of Durham may be discussed by the Joint Committee, but the constitutional question involved in the circumstances which occurred at the recent evictions is one which is not fit for a Committee to deal with, but one which should rather be dealt with by this House. I am very sorry that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland left his place just as I rose, because I wanted to assure him that he will find in these matters I am going to bring before the House plentiful proof of how the evil seed which he has sown in Ireland has already taken root, and brought forth fruit in our own country of England. I, of course, shall not venture to trouble the House with the whole of the circumstances connected with these evictions. I can assure the House that I will utter no word, which would at all imply any opinion that I may have as to the rights or wrongs of these evictions. My only interest in the matter from the first has been to try to get a trade difficulty brought to an honourable settlement, and I will even venture to appeal to an hon. Friend of mine—whom I am glad to see opposite—I would say to him, "Let us leave on one side the whole of the circumstances connected with the trade disputes;" and I ask, when he has heard the statement of facts I am able to bring before the House, will he not join with me in pleading with the Home Secretary that some more notice should be taken of this serious question than would probably be taken by the Joint Committee in the County of Durham? I say in my Motion that the principal illegalities were committed on the 25th February, during what the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary was pleased to call "the batoning by the police of a riotous mob." I would venture just to inform the House, with a view to the understanding of the whole question, that the illegalities on the part of the police by no means commenced on the 25th February, 1891. My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton asked a question here the other night as to whether the under-bailiffs who had been employed by the police to carry out these evictions had not been detained by the police. The right hon. Gentleman, I suppose—in fact, I know—acting upon information which he had received, unless I misunderstand his answer entirely, said that no person employed in these evictions had been illegally detained by the police. The right hon. Gentleman seems to contradict that. He is reported to have said so, and so I understood it. I am glad, however, to hear, even before I begin, that he does not intend to maintain the denial that he made to the hon. Member for Northampton the other day. I assert, and I wish him to understand that I assert, that the police and public officials of the community, paid by the community, deliberately kept men who wanted to escape from the work they were engaged in—this force in the ranks forced them to do work which they expressed a desire to escape from. They took them under escort down the yard, and lodged them in a room in a house and kept them there, preventing them from leaving, though again and again they attempted to do so, and they prevented them by force. I make that assertion to the right hon. Gentleman, and I venture to think that when I give him the grounds on which I make the statement he will not for a second time reply in this House that no one was illegally detained by the police. I will interpolate this remark. I do not wish to make use of any strong adjectives, but I beseech the House to believe that whatever adjectives I use I shall be willing both in my place here and elsewhere to produce legal proof to justify. Will the right hon. Gentleman just listen to this statement I am about to make? I will read from a copy of the depositions made by the under-bailiffs or, as we call them in the North of England, "Candymen." These are copies of depositions taken by a Tory solicitor well-known in the North, and a thoroughly upright and hon. Member of the legal profession. I will only trouble the House with a few sentences which relate to the precise point upon which I am speaking. One of the men says—

> "When I entered the first house it was occupied by a man and his wife, and others. I said, 'Here, Boss? we do not want to do this. Open the back door and let us out.' He was going to do so when two policemen prevented him."

A little further on he says—

> "Some of the men tried to get away on the road. I saw them try to get away, and I saw them dragged back by the police."

A little further on he says—

> "We were then marched off between the police. They said we should not leave, and I was afraid to break away."

He also says—

> "We were at the gates stopped by the police, who stretched their arms across and prevented us from leaving."

I hope the House will understand who these men were. They were not pit men or riotous men from Sunderland, but they were men actually employed by the police to carry out the evictions, and I assert here in my place that they were illegally and with violence detained by the police, and locked up and kept from exercising their perfect freedom. Here is another case. A second man says—

> "I saw two of us trying to get away. A police constable dragged them back. I would have left but I was afraid of the constable. I tried to get out of the back door, but the constable stopped me by getting hold of me."

Then comes a third, who says—

> "'Barrill' (that is one of the superintendents) took me by the arm and shoved me two or three times towards the door to prevent me from getting out of the house I wanted to escape from. Another police constable got hold of me by the arm and said he would put me in an iron cage, that would do me good for a bit. We said we might as well be in gaol as doing the dirty work we were engaged in. I was thrown out into the middle of the road by two policemen."

Another one swears—

> "I saw several get away, but the police constables got them and brought them back down the back streets, and I saw Bradshaw try to go, but he was pulled back by a police constable."

A fifth man says—

> "When I got back I tried to get away from the gate, but a policeman stopped me. I said, 'I want to go home.' The policeman said, 'You had better go back again.' I said, 'I won't.' The policeman then shoved me away up the yard and locked the gate upon me."

I shall be very glad to make a present of these copies to the Home Secretary, and I will ask him to get up and say whether the police, whose only function there was to see the evictions carried out and protect the evictors, were acting legally and constitutionally and properly in forcing these men against their will to evict and in preventing them by violence from escaping. I would not have troubled the Home Secretary but that I know he is entirely misinformed by official statements, which give half the truth, but not the whole truth. If he makes an independent inquiry, he will find and, as a constitutional lawyer, he will admit that the liberties of these people were most improperly dealt with by those who ought to have been the guardians of those liberties. The spirit of illegality has been fostered among the police in certain quarters, and this spirit of illegality is not discountenanced by the Authorities, and this spirit led to the unfortunate incident to which I am now calling attention. The circumstances are in a nutshell. The police and "candy men"—a jocular term applied to the eviction men — had done their brutal work, and were marching back to what will always be called "Candy Hall," which is on the road to Sunderland. When the police and "candy men" left, a great number of my constituents—not a mob, but a number of respectable men, with their wives and children—went with them. These people, when the evictions were over, walked beside the police towards their homes in Sunderland. They walked, laughing and talking together and with the police; and as they left, a number of stones were thrown. The right hon. Gentleman will not find me getting up and saying that the police had no provocation. I know, having been in the village, though I was not on the spot at the time, that the police were subjected to some provocation. Some stones were thrown — a considerable number of stones were thrown—but the police and these people marched on, the stones coming, as is always the case in such circumstances, from the outskirts of the crowd, and from a lot of wild young people in the fields; but around the police were some hundreds of men, women, and children accompanying them, and in conversation, some of them, with the police returning towards Sunderland. Half way up the road a sergeant broke into a field through the dyke, and caught three boys, and gave them a thrashing for throwing stones, and certainly, I think, they richly deserved what they got. I am not talking of the legality of the proceeding, no doubt anyone of us would have done the same under the circumstances. As soon as this was done, a number of girls and young men on the outskirts of the crowd took up clods of earth and stones—the right hon. Gentleman says bolts and rivets—but I do not find that was the fact——

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Rivets, not bolts.

MR. STOREY: Well, there is no substantial difference. But, I say, according to all independent information obtainable on the spot, the statement is not true. But, however, these clods of earth and stones were thrown from the outskirts of the crowd, and then the Superintendent halted his men, faced about, and, without any warning to the people, ordered the police to charge. Now, I wish the House to realise the state of things at the moment. It was a narrow road, with rather high hedges on either side, and a crowd of respectable, decent, quiet people were close to the police when the latter were ordered to charge. Now I understand, at least it is the general practice when the military are present to put down anything in the nature of a riotous disturbance, there is considerable hesitation and warning before the military are launched against the people. In many cases the Riot Act is read, and due notice given by Magistrates and officers, so that people may go out of the way; but the police recently, it seems to me, not only in Ireland, but in England, have claimed the right, on being stoned or attacked in any way, to turn on the people, and with batons, which in strong hands are more deadly weapons than swords, beat the people in the most violent fashion. Now, this is a serious matter, and unless the fullest justification can be shown it behoves every lover of liberty in this House to make a diligent inquest as to how it is, and under what conditions, the police exercise such power. If the officer in charge had formed his men across the road in line to prevent the people from coming further, separating the crowd and dividing his force—I believe there were some 150 or 200 police—if he had left the decent, quiet people to go on in front, they would have been able to get out of the scrimmage. Was it not the duty of the police to separate themselves from the people near them in order to get at the stone throwers? But this is what did occur: The police in the front rank rushed down the hill, batoned, struck, and kicked the people immediately near them, while others broke through the hedges on either side and did most unmercifully beat men, women, and children with their staves. Now this is a bold assertion, and I shall be required to bring sufficient evidence to justify such a serious allegation. I happened to arrive on the scene immediately after this business. I wish I had been there at the time. I venture to think I would either have been knocked down by the police or have taken some effective measure to prevent the brutality that occurred. One particular I should mention, the people did not resist the charge, there was no attempt at resistance, the people ran hither and thither like sheep before wolves. The police formed up and marched up the road. My hon. Friend the Member for Mid Durham, who was there, will be able to state what part he took in the matter, but the people of the village had never left the village. The people from Sunderland were scattered hither and thither, but the people of the village were standing in the village; and I admit that when I arrived there were growlings and cursings amongst them, because the wounded men and women were being brought up from the scene of the attack. No doubt there was a great deal of feeling displayed. My hon. Friend tried to pacify the men, and while he was doing this the police, 250 yards up the road, formed again and charged down upon the villagers who were standing in a crowd. It was then that my hon. Friend the Member for Mid Durham, in a most self-sacrificing way, rushed through the crowd towards the police with outstretched arms, begging the police to stop—uttering words which the informant of the right hon. Gentleman has twisted into commendation of the action of the police. Nothing of the sort. He said—

> "Men, you have had provocation, and I admit you have behaved well to us in the village, but for goodness sake do not charge the people again. Keep quiet and leave us to clear the streets."

It is on this simple statement the imputation is conveyed that he expressed approval of the action of the police. Well, he did pacify the people, and the whole thing ended for the time being. Naturally I shall be asked for my proofs of this serious accusation against the police, and I will give the Home Secretary, not my own statement, but a copy of the depositions made by persons before this respectable Conservative solicitor—persons of good repute and well known in Sunderland. The right hon. Gentleman in his answer seemed to minimise the number of people hurt.

MR. MATTHEWS: I gave the facts from the information given to me.

MR. STOREY: Yes, I quite understand the right hon. Gentleman is the victim of misrepresention in the matter, but let me assure him that though it is quite true that 30 people had their wounds dressed in the Sunderland Infirmary, at least a dozen others did not get to Sunderland at all, and as a matter of fact, some of these were very seriously wounded. Some 50 persons were hurt, and of these 47 were wounded behind, showing that they were violently struck while trying to get out of the way. Who were these people? I admit if they were part of the "riotous mob from Sunderland," a phrase some hon. Members cheered as if we kept that sort of article in Sunderland—I say, if these had formed part of a riotous mob then all I could say would be that they had met with the consequences of their action. But these were respectable people, and I will give the right hon. Gentleman briefly their depositions and names so that he may verify them. What does the right hon. Gentleman think of a case like this? Here is a statement of William Burlinson, of 12, Williamson Terrace, Monkwearmouth:—

> "I am a tradesman on my own account—a painter. I went to Silksworth to deliver an estimate for some painting for a builder who had written to me. I saw the police coming. I walked along the road with them. One of the police, James Ware, was a friend of mine. I was talking with him as we went down from the chapel into the 'slack.' About half a dozen stones were thrown, not more. When we were about half way up the bank one of the sergeants dropped behind, went through the hedge into the field, caught three boys who were throwing stones, and gave them a thrashing with his stick. When he did so I saw a number of persons, mostly girls, right behind, who threw dry earth and stones at the police. The Superintendent called 'halt,' and faced the men round. I was close to the Superintendent, and I never heard him tell the people to go away. My friend said to me, 'Skip out of the road, Bill, there's going to be a row.' I stepped to one side with my hands in my pockets. The police rushed straight at where I was and thrashed me all over the body with a great number of blows so that I am black and blue all over. I was just about losing my senses, and was lying in the ditch, when one of the policeman lifted his baton to strike me. At this moment another policeman running by said, 'Look out Dryden here's another.' Dryden looked round, and then turned and struck me as I lay. He brought his baton down with the full force of his arm on the back of my head which I had raised, split my head open, and the blood spurted all over me. He said, 'Hush you——take that.' I turned up my eyes to him and saw him distinctly. I was lying in the ditch helpless. I got up and crawled on my hands and knees a few yards further on the road towards Sunderland. The Superintendent was then gathering the men back into the ranks. I had

dropped on my knees on the roadside, being weak with loss of blood and the blows. Three or four police passed and kicked at me, one of them ran at me and gave me a kick in the hip and said—no, I cannot bring myself to repeat the filthy language used, whatever it was, let it be marked with a dash—'You — take that,' Some women came along and one of them lifted my head up and proceeded to bind it up with her apron; while doing so, another policeman kicked her and kicked me. Some other women lifted me into the 'bus and I was brought away to the Infirmary. My head was split with a wound 2½ inches each way. The doctor dressed my wounds."

I may tell the Home Secretary that this man, after being out of the Infirmary some days, had to go back again, and is considered to be in a rather critical condition by the doctor who has attended him from the first. I may add, further, that Mrs. Richardson is prepared to testify that the policeman did strike the man and did insult and strike her while she was engaged in her act of mercy. Now let me give the Home Secretary another instance from the five or six typical cases I select, to show how unjustifiable was the conduct of the police. Here is the case of James Ranigan, of 31, Potts Street, Millfield. Being idle, he says he went to Silksworth on Wednesday and was returning at the same time as the police escort. When the police charged without a moment's notice, he was about ten yards behind the main body. They soon come up to where he was. Though he made every effort to get out of the way, he was knocked down by a blow on the head and tramped upon. He managed to crawl into the dyke with an old man. The first charge was then over. Two superintendents were standing near, and one of them said to him, "Your men from Sunderland are the instigators of this disturbance." He made no reply. A policeman then walked up and struck him twice upon the head, although he was already bleeding. He was also bruised about the arms and body. He then said to the old man: "We had better get back to Sunderland as quickly as we can." To do this they had to go through the policemen. The old man did not attempt this, but Ranigan did and got safely through until reaching the last lot, when an officer said, "Charge him he has not had enough." One constable then struck him on the back. A gentleman, wearing a light suit, was standing near at the time. Ranigan ran and the officer ran after him and struck him again on the side and back. He is unable to identify any of the officers. Now the Home Secretary said no women were hurt, and only one little girl. Now I saw the little girl, and I do not envy the feelings of that policeman who maltreated her. But there were women struck and kicked. Here is the statement of an elderly woman, the wife of John Southern, of Garden Cottage, Fulwell. She, with her husband and son, had gone out to see the evictions and were in the crowd, peaceably walking along near the police when the charge was made. Her son, a young man of 22, was talking to a constable whom he knew, just before the charge. A constable struck her husband on the back four or five times with a baton. Just as he got out of the road of one, another came and struck him. Five policemen were upon him at one time. The same with her son, who was attacked by six policemen at once, and left on the ground in a pool of blood, as she thought, dead. The sight quite unnerved her, and even to speak of it again brought tears to her eyes. As a boy her son got five stitches in his head, and the beating he got on Wednesday opened them all out again. Dr. Stobo is attending him now. He is able to walk about but is weak from loss of blood. Here again is the experience of an invalid named Thomas Fletcher, of 17, Whitburn Street, Monkwearmouth. Five months ago, whilst working at Messrs. Blumer's shipbuilding yard, an accident befel him which smashed his right elbow so that his arm remained stiff and he could not bend it. He was advised by the surgeon attending him to take plenty of exercise, and in an evil hour for him he, on the Wednesday, walked out towards Silksworth. He was sitting by the dyke-side, this man with the lame arm who could not have thrown a stone had he wanted to, when the charge was made, and this happened to him: He was struck by half a dozen policemen. His head was broken, the shoulder of the wounded arm was bruised and became swollen; his legs have marks of violence, and there can be no doubt he received very severe treatment. The old wound for which he had been treated for months was brought back to its old state from the damage he received. And this innocent man was one of those who formed what is described to the Home Secretary as "a riotous mob from Sunderland." Here is another account from Mr. Ralph Parker, and I am glad to say that I can personally speak as to the respectability of Mr. Ralph Parker, as indeed I can of others who give this evidence. He says he recently belonged to Silksworth, but now lives at Monkwearmouth Colliery. He went up to the former colliery for the purpose of looking after his friends. He was going quietly along the road, and when he saw what was occurring he endeavoured to get out of the way. Whilst doing so he received three blows which knocked him down on the road. A woman ran up to him to lift him up, and was about to take her apron off to dress the wound when another policeman said, "If you don't leave off, you ——," calling her by the foulest epithet that can be addressed to a woman—"I'll knock you down." The woman fled. Now let me give the evidence of a gentleman who was fortunate enough to escape injury, but he gives an account which I commend to the attention of the Home Secretary. This gentleman, Mr. Edgar Thompson, an Insurance agent, was returning from Silksworth at the time the police were coming from the village, and he saw the charge of the police. Because some persons on the outskirts of the crowd threw stones at the police, they immediately charged the crowd, batoning 300 or 400 persons, and seriously wounding 50 of them, none of whom had taken any part in the stone-throwing. There was no attempt at resistance, no attempt to arrest the stone-throwers, not a single stone-thrower was reached, but because some stones had been thrown the police fell to work with their batons mercilessly beating constituents of mine, infinitely more respectable than the policemen who did this dastardly deed. Probably the Home Secretary will say this was done in the heat of passion, they were young fellows, and it is not pleasant to have stones rattling about your ears. But, I say these are men under discipline, and even if they did temporarily get out of control, yet suppose after the men had been brought back into the ranks and half an hour had elapsed, that some of them left the ranks and fell to beating and kicking Her Majesty's subjects, would not that be conduct deserving the severest condemnation of every decent man and respector of order? Here is what occurred, and it can be proved by 10 witnesses who, if the police can be identified, are prepared to state these facts. Here is the statement of Robert Brewis, of 51, Hedley-street, Sunderland—

> "I am a miner at Silksworth Colliery, but I live in Sunderland. On Wednesday, February 25th, I was up at Silksworth. I was in the shed being erected to house the furniture when the charge occurred—"

I may tell the House that I am absolutely certain the man was there and not in the *mêlée*, because I was there talking to him, and I know he did not leave the shed until I left, and when I arrived at the scene all the row, or riot, was over and things had quieted down. He started to go home. He fixed the time at ten minutes past two.

> "When I left the village there were five Superintendents of Police."

I am not sure whether he is quite correct; at any rate, there were five police officers there—

> "One of them said to me, as I was passing, 'If you Sunderland fellows come up to-morrow you will get your heads cracked.' I said, 'What for? I have as much right on the high road as you.'"

That is the sort of men we breed in Sunderland; they are not afraid of the police—

> "I went towards Sunderland, and when I got up to Davison's public house—"

exactly 400 yards from Silksworth—

> "a body of police were standing. I walked past. The police shouted 'You shipyard b——s,' and made signs as if they would thrash them. I ran. Four of them came out of the ranks and ran after me. One of them struck me on the side of the head as I ran, and knocked me down on my face in the road. When I was down, he kicked me twice; when I got up, he struck me right and left, and knocked me into the hedge. I got up again, and ran for my hat; another policeman struck me; his number, I believe, is 481. I got up and said: 'Mind, I have your number; you will hear from me about this.' I then walked away."

Unfortunately, the man wanted the number of the second policeman who had hit and kicked him. He went to the Superintendent, who declined to give his name, though he knew it.

MR. WHARTON (Ripon): What is the name of the Superintendent?

MR. STOREY: Superintendent Oliver, who called the men back to the ranks and ordered the sergeant to take their names. The Superintendent, when I applied personally, refused to give the names, and referred me to Colonel White. I did not propose to write to Colonel White, feeling it was the duty of the Superintendent to disclose the names of the officers who were charged with assault. But the point to which I wish to call attention is this—All this occurred 40 minutes after what the right hon. Gentleman calls a riot. No less than six persons saw the whole of the circumstances, and can prove that the man did not interfere with the police, and that the police made a brutal and deliberate assault upon him. After the details I have given, it will be believed that there is a great deal of feeling both in Sunderland and in that part of the City of Durham. I do not think the Home Secretary would read another answer as he did the last, in a tone which implied, amidst approving cheers opposite, that this was a riotous mob from Sunderland. There never was a riotous mob from Sunderland—["Oh!"]—save in the old days, when Sunderland was Tory. There was no riotous mob from Sunderland that day. What rioting and stone-throwing there was occurred among those who struck on the outskirts of the crowd, yet the Superintendent and his men fell upon and batoned and kicked respectable persons who had a perfect right to be on the high road. For that reason I felt it my duty to move the adjournment of the House, feeling certain that, although there are political differences, hon. Members opposite will not yield to us in seeing that the liberties of the English subject are preserved, and that the power of the police shall be kept in absolute legal control, and under the authority of those who represent the public. I beseech the right hon. Gentleman, when he gets up, not to say that this is a case for inquiry by the Joint Committee. I think I have made out a sufficient case to justify the Home Secretary in granting a public inquiry. I know he will suggest that we might have gone before a Magistrate. That will be done in one or two cases; but the House will readily understand, in the dust of a *mêlée* that was all over in two minutes, how difficult it was to fix upon particular officers. I venture to submit that we should have such an inquiry as will first of all establish the facts, and, secondly, as will lead to the framing of some rule under which the police shall be restrained from these baton charges, which are common in another country, but which have not heretofore been common in ours. Many a time, when I have heard Members for Ireland describing these baton charges by the police, I have thought that there was some degree of exaggeration, due to their fervid imaginations; but, from what I know has taken place here, I am not prepared to disbelieve anything almost that Irish Members may say as to the conduct of the police in Ireland. I submit that I have made out a case for independent inquiry, so that the truth may be known and a better system established.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House do now adjourn."

(5.40.) MR. MATTHEWS: I do not in the least complain of the action of the hon. Member, or of the manner in which he has presented his case to the House; but I take it that it is perfectly clear that many of those who are his constituents have suffered injuries which are usual when such *mêlées* occur. Of course, the hon. Member is perfectly justified in making these occurrences known at the earliest possible time to the public through this House. At the same time I cannot help pointing out that the course is open to grave objection. The hon. Member, as I understand, was not himself a witness of the great bulk of the facts he has described. He has spoken of depositions, but I do not know that it adds to their weight that they were taken by a Tory solicitor.

MR. STOREY: What I meant roughly was that these statements were not made in the hurry of the moment, but were serious legal documents.

MR. MATTHEWS: I do not understand that they were made before any Court of Justice, but in a solicitor's office. While I do not disparage the statements of the various persons, it is quite impossible that I can deal with them, or say anything of their truth one way or the other. The hon. Member might, I think, have taken the course which, I think, would have been the right one, of going to the Head Constable first—who is responsible for the conduct of the officers, and whose duty it is to maintain discipline among them—because he has means, which I have not, of getting at the constables implicated. I understand that the hon. Member, on some ground or other, declined to see Colonel White. On the other hand, I can tell him my sole informant is Colonel White. ["Oh!"] I would like to know what other informant I could possibly have. I will read what the Chief Constable wrote.

MR. STOREY: Was Colonel White there?

MR. MATTHEWS: I gather from what the hon. Member said that he was not there either.

MR. STOREY: Colonel White was not there.

MR. MATTHEWS: I know nothing about whether Colonel White was or was not there. I am now going to give the evidence of another witness. Colonel White in his letter said that all went quietly at the evictions until Wednesday the 25th February, when "there was a large and riotous crowd, chiefly from Sunderland." The hon. Member will understand that I am not asserting this to be true; it is the statement of a responsible officer. The letter goes on—

> "The crowd continued to shout and pelt the police with stones and small rivets of iron from the ship yards, hooting many of them, until the Superintendent in charge of the party"—

I believe, from the newspapers, it was Superintendent Oliver—

> "an old and experienced officer, halted them, and loudly cautioned the mob to desist or he would drive them away by force, but as none of them paid attention to his warning, he felt compelled to charge the mob with drawn batons. It had the desired effect of dispersing the riotous mob, and during the conflict some thirty persons were more or less injured, but none dangerously; and only one female, a little girl, supposed to have been crushed by the mob."

Colonel White goes on to say that the riotous mob which followed and assaulted the bailiffs came chiefly from Sunderland, and did not consist of Silksworth men. He adds that he does not apprehend any renewal of the disturbance, and that if he sees any reason for such apprehension he will communicate with the Magistrates of the district. I think the hon. Member will at least acknowledge that in the answer I gave to his question a short time ago I was giving him, as, of course, I was bound to do, the exact substance of the information I had received. I quite admit that the depositions which have been read by the hon. Member, and as to which, of course, I knew nothing, give a different account of the transaction from that furnished by Colonel White, although in some respects I think the absolute contradiction rests more on the statement of the hon. Member than on the documents he read. The hon. Member has stated that that there were no rivets thrown.

MR. STOREY: I did not want to trouble the House with an unnecessary repetition of statements, but I asserted, and I can, I think, prove, that there were no rivets thrown. If my statement is contradicted, I want to have the contradiction from some one who was there, and who can say he saw what went on. I know that what the right hon. Gentleman asserts has been said in some of the newspapers, but against that I put the testimony of those who were present.

MR. MATTHEWS: I can only say what I am told by those who give me information on this subject; but I would point out to the hon. Member that if he wants all these things cleared up he has it in his power to institute a much more satisfactory inquiry than I could direct. He has mentioned the name of one policeman and the number of another, and I do not hesitate to say that if the statements he has read describing the conduct of those policemen can be proved, those men grossly exceeded their duty, and would be liable to proceedings for assault in the same way as any other subject of Her Majesty.

MR. STOREY: Before whom?

MR. MATTHEWS: Before whom? Why, before any Magistrate of the land. I commend the suggestion to the hon. Member and to this House, that it would be much more satisfactory that these facts should be sifted and ascertained in a Court of Justice, where there could be full cross-examination of the witnesses, than by means of any inquiry I could offer, unless under statutory enactment, which I hardly think would be asked for in such a case as this. The hon. Member has told us that Superintendent Oliver—

an officer who has discharged his duty with credit, and who is a man of character and respectability in the Sunderland Police Force — declined to give the names of the four policemen who, upon the statement of Mr. Brewis, behaved with scandalous disregard of what was proper and right for policemen to do, who committed an unprovoked, an unnecessary, and a brutal assault upon Mr. Brewis. I do not think I am using language too strong in so describing the conduct charged. But I submit that before the hon. Member comes and asks for an inquiry it is his duty to go to the Magistrate and charge the policemen; if he fails in getting redress, then, perhaps, he might come possibly to the person who is in some sense responsible for everything that goes wrong in this way throughout the country. I beg again to point out that these police are not in my hands. I have no authority to order them to do this, that, or the other, nor have I a right to call upon them, except as a matter of courtesy, for any account of their transactions. I believe the Chairman of the Joint Committee for the County of Durham is in the House, and I trust we shall hear from him whether there is any probability that that Committee will refuse to do justice and make a proper inquiry in a case in which brutal misconduct is charged against the police under their command. I would make this general observation. I have no hesitation in saying that the police are no more justified than any other subjects of Her Majesty in using weapons of offence, and they are no less. The batons of the police are weapons of defence and not of offence, and the police ought to have perfect self-command and self-control. If the statement of the Chief Constable be correct, there can be no doubt that a large crowd of roughs, no matter whence they came, surrounded the police in charge of the party of bailiffs, and for a considerable time pelted them with stones and pieces of iron, hitting and wounding many of them. This being so, I can have no doubt that the officer in command of that detachment was perfectly justified in ordering the police to charge for the purpose of dispersing the crowd. When their charge was made and the purpose of defence had been answered they should have held their hand. At the same time, at the risk of stating a truism, I would add that the police, in my experience, are, like other human beings, apt to give way to feelings of excitement and anger under circumstances of provocation and difficulty, and he would be hypercritical who would blame them too severely for giving way to over-excitement and going a little beyond the line of their legal rights. I hope the hon. Member will not understand me as defending or excusing any acts on the part of the police which go beyond their strict line of duty; but, at the same time, although I cannot excuse such acts, I think every just man will remember how difficult, if not impossible, it is in cases where strife begins to keep even disciplined men under absolute control. Until it is proved that the Local Authorities have not done their duty in inquiring into these allegations, I do not feel justified in granting the inquiry asked for by my hon. Friend.

(6.1.) MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Mid): As I was a spectator of these occurrences I can perhaps give the Home Secretary the information he desires. I am very sorry that disputes between employers and employed have taken place, but I should like to correct an impression which exists, that in the present instance the blame is to be attached to the workmen. The inception of this affair did not lie with the workmen, and if their advice had been taken this sad occurrence would never have been brought under the notice of the House. I should like to give a review of what actually took place, as it has been my lot, as agent for the men, to take part in the evictions, and to try to adjust matters. As to the general conduct of the police I have nothing to say, except as to their interference with myself when I was taking the candy men away from the works. I was told by Superintendent Oliver that the men were under contract, and that they had no right to go away; but I replied that a man is entitled to leave his employment whenever he likes if he is prepared to take the consequences of breaking his contract. As to what has been called the riot of the 25th February, it would be untrue if I were to say that no stones were thrown, because I bear the mark of one on my own forehead. I and others endeavoured to persuade the villagers to remain quiet, because we felt sure from the temper, manifestations, and expressions of the police that a collision between them and the people would be a serious thing. The people of Silksworth observed our recommendation, except three or four of them; and when the policemen got about 200 yards from where we left them we saw them scattering the people right and left. The policemen formed themselves into a square, and charged at the double-quick. I agree that some of the policemen were hurt by the stones; but, at the same time, I believe they would have effected their purpose quite as efficiently if they had charged without drawing or using their batons. I certainly never praised the police for making that charge, as has been suggested. The hon. Member for Sunderland in his statement said that most of the people injured were those who had not thrown any stones. With that I agree. Those who throw stones are most cowardly people, and are always ready to run away. They hang on the outskirts of the crowd, and those who do not throw stones are therefore taken quite unawares by the attack, and are in many cases very seriously injured. I should like to impress upon the Home Secretary the desirability of holding an inquiry for the sake of the police constables as well as for the sake of the people. Here was a serious dispute in a large industrial centre, and if the impression remains that the police charged a crowd without any cause whatever, or any sufficient cause, a great deal of bad feeling will exist between them and the people of Durham. If, however, witnesses are called on both sides to give evidence before some proper tribunal as to the stone throwing and attack by the police, I believe this irritation will be at an end. I think it is right we should know on whose side the fault really lies. I have no fault to find with the police as regards the manner in which the evictions have been carried out. I am aware it is an obnoxious duty, and I believe the police felt, with others, that it was hard to see people turned out of their homes when there was no one else to put in them. That is a doglike way of conducting things to win in a trade dispute, and is not one which will settle on whose side lies the right. I feel bound to say that had the police charged without drawing their batons the crowd would have been dispersed quite as effectually, and no violence would have been necessary.

(6.15.) MR. WHARTON: The House must, I think, feel it has just had an honest, straightforward account of what occurred from the hon. Member who last spoke, and will thank him for giving it. I should not myself have risen to say a word on this subject if I had not been alluded to as Chairman of the Joint Committee for the County of Durham, and if I had not been many years before Chairman of the Police Committee of the Magistrates. I want to see justice done to two men who have been referred to, the Chief Constable for Durham and Superintendent Oliver. With respect to Superintendent Oliver, if there is one in the whole Force whom I would have picked out as a man of forbearance and one to be thoroughly trusted it is that gentleman; and unless I hear on sworn authority before a competent tribunal that he was guilty of the acts attributed to him, I shall refuse to believe the allegations. As for the Chief Constable, he is a man whose moderation and courtesy are known in the whole county, and it is a matter of regret to me to hear the hon. Member for Sunderland sneer at the Chief Constable.

MR. STOREY: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon. I did not sneer at him. I only said that as far as I knew he had not been applied to.

MR. WHARTON: If the hon. Member had applied to the Chief Constable, he would have found him to be a man of great ability and of the greatest possible courtesy. The Government are asked to have an inquiry, but of what kind? If there is to be an inquiry, let it be an inquiry before a competent authority and upon sworn evidence; do not let us have the tittle-tattle of newspapers. If the allegations are that the police have exceeded their duty, it is well that they should be tested before a proper tribunal, and the proper tribunal is the tribunal of the Magistrates. Now, I have heard the hon. Member for Sunderland in this House speak very generously of the Magistrates of the County of Durham, and therefore to-day I was sorry to hear him throw doubt upon their impartial action. Who are the Magistrates the hon. Member doubted? Is it the Magistrates of the County Bench at Sunderland? There is, I believe, no more efficient Bench in England. The Magistrates constitute the proper tribunal to investigate these charges; they can have sworn testimony before them. I can only say, on behalf of the Chief Constable and of the Joint Committee, that as far as any informal inquiry can be held this matter will be investigated.

(6.20.) Mr. ATHERLEY-JONES (Durham, N.W.): I quite agree with what fell from the hon. Gentleman who last spoke as to the extremely high character of Superintendent Oliver, and as to the great capacity and extreme urbanity of the Chief Constable. I have long known both gentlemen, and am satisfied that they endeavour to perform their duties satisfactorily. My real motive in intervening in this Debate is to urge upon the Home Secretary the strong advisability of instituting an inquiry. If I may say so, I do not quite agree with the accuracy of his statement that in the past there have only been two Departmental Inquiries. As far as my investigations have gone, there have been more than two inquiries into occurrences such as these. And, again, with regard to Mr. Bridge's inquiry at Cardiff, I may point out to the right hon. Gentleman he was not quite right in saying it was conducted at the instance of the Local Authority, for I believe the Home Office authorities were the first to suggest that a special investigation should be made. The hon. Member for the Ripon Division said that to order an inquiry before Justices of the Peace was a proper and legitimate course to pursue. I do not deny that, generally speaking, it would be the proper course; but the right hon. Gentleman will forgive me for pointing out that at an investigation at Petty Sessions the inquiry is limited to the circumstances of the particular case before the Committee, and the investigation is controlled by the ordinary rules of evidence. Now, such an inquiry as that which was held at Cardiff must result in eliciting information which could not be adduced before a Court of Petty Sessions; and I am sure that the sending down to Durham of a Metropolitan Magistrate to investigate this matter would give satisfaction not only to the hon. Member for Sunderland, but to the whole county. There is another matter to which I should life to refer. It is perfectly well known to all who are familiar with these unfortunate evictions that the great source of exasperation was the employment of a number of disreputable and dissolute characters know as candymen. They were employed not by the police, but by the owners. They were the scum and scouring of the streets of large towns, such as Leeds and Bradford, and they were regaled liberally with intoxicating liquors. I would point out to the Home Secretary and to my hon. Friends that there is no power on the part of the police to allow the owners and agents to employ candymen for the purpose of carrying out the evictions. The proper course to pursue if the police are not in sufficient force to carry out the evictions is that they should engage assistance, for they are really exercising the functions of the Sheriff. Had they done that, and had they continued to show the spirit of forbearance and consideration which had characterised their conduct up to the time of these unfortunate disturbances, I am confident these riotous proceedings would have been avoided. I have but little to add. I have made inquiries of all classes, and of people living in Sunderland and adjoining districts, and the testimony has been almost unanimous that the police in the charge used a considerable amount of unnecessary brutality. I have no doubt they were excited and irritated, and that up to the moment of the charge they showed great forbearance; but I expect that careful inquiry will show that individual policemen did commit grave outrages. I therefore hope that the Home Secretary will do as former Home Secretaries have done, and order an inquiry. As to an investigation before Justices of the Peace—to whose fairness and general integrity I desire to bear testimony—I hold that such an inquiry, limited, as it would be, to particular cases, would be inadequate for properly ascertaining whether or not the police exceeded their duty.

(6.30.) Sir H. DAVEY (Stockton): I am rather disappointed we have not received some assurance from the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for the Ripon Division that there will be some inquiry by the Standing Joint Committee into the charges made by the hon. Members for Sunderland and Mid Durham. I do not wish to throw any doubt on the competence of Colonel White. No doubt that gentleman deserves everything the hon. and learned Member for the Ripon Division said about him. I believe the County and Borough Benches of Sunderland deserve all he said about them, but what we want is to be satisfied that some inquiry will be held into the charges made. I admit that there is great force in what the Home Secretary has said—that the use of County Councils and Local Authorities is to investigate a question of this kind without the necessity of calling the attention of the House of Commons to it; but we do not wish to be sent from one authority to another, from one official to another, while making an endeavour to probe the incident to the bottom. The statements which have been made by the hon. Member for Sunderland are not, strictly speaking, evidence: they stand no higher than what some of us are familiar with, the proofs of witnesses which we are furnished with before witnesses are sworn. But we have the distinct admission of the Home Secretary and the hon. Member for the Ripon Division that if these statements are proved by proper legal evidence the police exceeded their duty, and were guilty of excessive violence. I quite admit it would be more satisfactory to have an inquiry on sworn evidence, but we cannot get it, and for the reason that the complainants cannot obtain the names of the police who maltreated them. No. 481 kicked the man Brewis when he was down, but what we want to get at is the name of the man who first knocked Brewis down. I appeal to the hon. Member for the Ripon Division to use his influence with the Committee over which he presides to direct an inquiry into the allegations made with respect to this matter; or to use his authority to induce those in command of the police to furnish the hon. Member for Sunderland with the names of the policemen who have been concerned in this affair.

Mr. WHARTON: I have not been quite understood. I stated that I considered the proper course to be taken was, having got at any rate two policemen connected with this affair, first of all to cause an inquiry to be made before a Magistrate—that the men should be charged with assault, and the witnesses brought forward and subjected to cross-examination. Speaking for myself, and as far as I can do so for the Standing Joint Committee, I think there is no doubt that an inquiry will be made by them into the affair. We have no power, however, to take evidence on oath; and evidence on oath is far more satisfactory than statements not on oath. The Standing Joint Committee is composed of 24 members, and 24 Judges or Commissioners form a somewhat cumbrous body, but as far as we can I think we shall inquire into this matter.

(6.36.) Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I think the question raised by the Motion of my hon. Friend is a much more important one than can be satisfactorily dealt with by any inquiry before a Magistrate. It is a question not merely of one or two assaults by police constables; it is a question of the growing tendency on the part of the police here and there to regard their batons as instruments of punishment rather than as instruments wherewith to defend the law. ["Oh, oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen seem to question that, but over and over again the hon. Member for Sunderland told us of cases in which flying men were pursued and beaten on the back. What right has a policeman to use his baton under such circumstances? It cannot be denied that the same thing has been done in other parts of the country. There is another reason for asking for a more important and solemn and responsible inquiry than can be obtained in the locality. We have observed during the course of this Debate that whenever the energy and vigour of the police has been referred to it has been enthusiastically cheered on the other side. The statement of my hon. Friend, that the police might have done everything that was necessary by threatening to charge, was scouted and sneered at by hon. Gentlemen opposite. When we were told how the police rushed down and violently batoned these unarmed and helpless people there were loud cheers. In those cheers there is very considerable reason for not being satisfied with any local inquiry. The hon. and learned Member for the Ripon

Division seemed to think we slight and slander the Standing Joint Committee if we say we are not quite satisfied with them as a Court of Inquiry. I take it that body is mainly composed of gentlemen such as those who sit opposite, and who admire, above all things, vigour, energy, and physical force on the part of the police. Hon. Gentlemen opposite always cheer violence; they cheered flogging in the Army; they heard with satisfaction of a sentence of 150 lashes passed on a burglar; they cheer all kinds of revival of torture. It is not to a body composed of gentlemen of that temper we would commit such an inquiry as we ask for. There is a dangerous tendency on the part of some portion of the police. I myself, when going home late at night from this House, have had occasion to observe the temper in which some of the police occasionally discharge their duties. They are not satisfied with keeping order; they try to punish disorder without even bringing people before a Magistrate. Such a tendency ought to be discouraged, and it would not exist amongst the police unless those in authority were ready to condone, or even to encourage this action on their part. I do not think we ought to be satisfied with a mere local inquiry in this instance, but we ought to insist upon the Government undertaking to look into the circumstances.

(6.43.) MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down says that the question of real importance raised by the Resolution is the great tendency on the part of the police, who are the guardians of order, to use more force than is absolutely necessary for their purpose. I thought the hon. Gentleman and his friends had already decided that the remedy for any improper conduct on the part of the police was to entrust them to a Local Authority. At all events, that has been their argument with regard to the Irish police. Now, however, it appears that these hon. Gentlemen have no confidence either in the police or in the Local Authority, and that on the first occasion on which a complaint is made against the police force which is under the control of a Local Authority, these gentlemen come down and declare that the one person in whom they have confidence is the Home Secretary and the Department he administers. I do not know whether the hon. Member for Leicester has had any practical experience of local government. I do not think he has; but I confess I was surprised that my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland should have taken up the line he has done, because I know that he has been a great advocate of the dignity and authority and power of local government, and has himself taken a very active part in local work; and having been Mayor of Sunderland, he probably knows as well as anyone in the House how far a Watch Committee or a Committee entrusted with the control of the police may be trusted to make all necessary inquiries when the Police Force misbehaves itself. I regret that my hon. Friend, whom I have always counted as an advocate with myself of the privileges of local government, should now, as it appears to me, throw doubt on our Local Institutions. What is the state of the case? Here is a *primâ facie* case made out by the statements of my hon. Friend and the hon. Member for Mid Durham—in his most temperate speech—a *primâ facie* case against the police. But who has made out a case either against the Local Magistrates or against the Local Authority, the Standing Joint Committee? They have not been tried. Surely it is a perfectly monstrous thing before these gentlemen have acted, and when there is no proof whatever that they will not act satisfactorily and do full justice in the case, to put them aside and to ask this House to interfere. I protest in the name of local government, and I say that if the Home Secretary—I am not speaking of the present occupant of the office more than any other—were to make it the rule whenever there is a row in any locality, without waiting for the action of the Watch Committee or other Local Authority, to interpose an inquiry from the Central Department, he would certainly be the most unpopular Home Secretary who ever filled the office. I have one further objection to the unfortunate precedent which has been cited by my hon. Friend behind me. One of the objects, we have been told, of the extension of local government—one reason why we should give the police of Ireland to Local Authorities in Ireland—is that we should relieve this House of a great deal of unnecessary business. Here, on the very first occasion on which a dispute arises in that particular district which is represented by my hon. Friend, he comes down and takes up the time of the House for two hours or more, when it has other and more important business to attend to, and seeks to put the Local Authority aside. Under these circumstances, how can he himself with any reason ask us to hand over the police of Ireland to Local Authorities on the ground that we should save Parliamentary time? We should have all the difficulty we have now just as much as ever. We should have the nominal control in the Local Authority and the real control in the Central Authority; and if the Local Authority is to be supervised, put into leading-strings and swaddling-clothes in the way my hon. Friend suggests, I submit he will be making a very strong argument for giving all control of the police of England to that Central Authority which apparently he considers to be the only adequate one.

(6.50.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The right hon. Gentleman says he protests in the name of local government. I think he rather protests in the name of coercion in Ireland. He is so accustomed to praising in this House batoning in Ireland, that he cannot refrain from praising the Home Secretary for refusing to interfere in this case. So far as I am concerned, I have listened with a perfectly judicial mind to what has been said, and I have come to the conclusion that there is a *primâ facie* case against the police of the County of Durham. We have had all these depositions read. The Home Secretary thinks everybody must be bound to tell a lie if he does not swear to his statements over and over again. For my part, I believe in the depositions, as I believed in those of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Birmingham on a former occasion, and voted for them.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN: They were not mine.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No, your Friends opposite complained that they were not yours, and they complained that they were not true. In this case

Mr. J. Chamberlain

we have, putting aside the depositions, two hard facts, which make a *primâ facie* case that the police acted improperly. We have the fact that 50 persons—the police say 30—were seriously injured by the attacks of the police, and a very great number were taken to the infirmary. Can the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary tell us of one single policeman who was really so much injured by stone-throwing that he was taken into the infirmary? The other strong point is, that when Superintendent Oliver was asked to give the names of two policemen who were alleged to have attacked individuals, he refused to do so. I hold that a policeman has a number in order that persons may see it, and that any superintendent or other police officer ought, when asked, to give the numbers or names of men against whom charges or misconduct are made. We are asked to refer this matter to the Standing Joint Committee of Durham. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chamberlain) says that here we have a case for local government, and we want to drag in the Home Secretary and to show our confidence in him. For my part, I say, with all respect for the right hon. Gentleman, I have no confidence in him. What we want is a public inquiry. The right hon. Gentleman forgets that we have not got any local self-government in Durham. What is the Standing Joint Committee? Why, it is packed with County Magistrates.

MR. WHARTON: I believe, Sir, that two members of the Standing Joint Committee are on strike at the present time.

MR. STOREY: Only one.

MR. LABOUCHERE: But how is the Committee composed? How many Magistrates are there on it?

MR. WHARTON: Half and half.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Well, that is quite enough to leaven the mass, and leaven it most injuriously. This is what the right. hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham calls an independent local self-government—a Committee of which half the members are elected and half are nominated by the Lord Lieutenant. It is because we have no local government, in the real sense of the word, in the county, and because the Conservative Government refused to give the control of the police to elected representatives of the ratepayers, that we object to going before this Joint Committee and ask for a public inquiry. There was an inquiry in Cardiff, and there might be a similar one here. The right hon. Gentleman says the Town Council of Cardiff asked for an inquiry. Well, my hon. Friend, who is Member for Sunderland and a Member of the Town Council, asks for one. The right hon. Gentleman seems to think he has answered the question when he says the men came from Sunderland, and, therefore, were roughs, and, therefore, ought to have had their heads broken. He cannot expect my hon. Friend to accept that. We say we ought to have an inquiry. If the right hon. Gentleman will grant such an inquiry as took place at Cardiff, it will not be necessary to divide; if not, I hope my hon. Friend will go to a Division.

(7.0.) The House divided:—Ayes 121; Noes 205.—(Div. List, No. 73.)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES, 1891-2.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £5,632,700, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge of the Pay, Allowances, and other Charges of Her Majesty's Army at Home and Abroad (exclusive of India) (General Staff, Regiments, Reserve, and Departments), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

(7.11.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I was somewhat surprised at the very sanguine observation of the First Lord when this Vote was before us on the last occasion that though Debate had lasted only some 10 or 12 minutes he hoped that this enormous Vote would be granted at once. If the right hon. Gentleman will carry his memory back to 1884, he will remember that the entire month of February in that year was occupied in discussion of this very Vote, and Motions for its reduction, all because there had been an expedition to Tokar, and, therefore, the right hon. Gentleman must not expect us to refrain now from discussing the recent Tokar expedition, and, indeed, the Army in Egypt, altogether. It is obvious that if we did not keep this portion of our Army in Egypt the expense of maintaining our Army would, by the cost of so many, be reduced. Here let me make a correction in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. He stated that the number of English troops in Egypt had been considerably reduced, and that during the time the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was in office the number of troops in Egypt was 12,000. I think he will find he is mistaken. The numbers went up and down. If is perfectly true that when there were military operations going on either in Alexandria, Suakin, or in the Soudan, when operations were in progress for the defence of the Southern Frontier, there were as many as 12,000 men in Egypt; but I think if he takes the figures he will find that on an average there were not more men in Egypt, when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian was Prime Minister, than there are at the present moment.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Oh!

MR. LABOUCHERE: I understand that the right hon. Gentleman disagrees with me, and believes there were many more men in Egypt then than now. But if he will take the average from two years, say, after the battle of Tel-el-Kebir up to the time when the late Government left office, and not taking into account periods when active military operations were going on, he will find that the number was considerably less than 12,000, and not probably more than the present number.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I will give the hon. Gentleman the exact figures, as I know he loves accuracy above all things. On August 1, 1886, the number of troops in Egypt was 9,113, that being a considerable reduction from the beginning of the year.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Yes; but I think then there were certain military operations in progress.

MR. E. STANHOPE: No.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Well, they were still hanging on at Suakin. But I will not quarrel about the figures. The reason why troops were kept in Egypt after Tel-el-Kebir was because we were told it was very possible a revolution might break out either in Cairo or Alexandria, and that the revolutionists might destroy the Canal. Therefore we were asked, in the interests of civilisation and the Empire, to retain the troops there until an efficient Egyptian Army was established able to defend the Suez Canal. That was the main argument used, but there were a dozen others equally bad relied on as justification for imposing this increased charge upon our taxpayers. During the tenure of office by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, although the troops were not withdrawn from Egypt, it is an undoubted fact that there was the intention to withdraw them. I will go further, and say that it was agreed absolutely that at some time they should be withdrawn. There was always some unfortunate circumstance occurring—once sickness broke out amongst them, and then again disturbances broke out in the Soudan—which prevented their withdrawal, but it was the normal intention, if I may call it so, of the Government of the right hon. Gentleman to withdraw the troops from Egypt. At any rate, the right hon. Gentleman and his Colleagues again and again stated that they would withdraw them as soon as a proper Government was established in Egypt, as soon as there was sufficient Egyptian military force to keep down any revolution that might lead to the destruction of the Suez Canal. But the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has expanded this matter very largely; he has told us we are not to withdraw so long as we may imagine it possible that any Foreign Government may take our place and occupy Egypt. The only possible Government he could have in his mind is the Government of France; and, therefore, I ask whether any negotiations have been instituted with France to neutralise Egypt or not to occupy Egypt, or whether the great European Powers have been asked to place Egypt under International Law, so that it shall remain a neutral country? If anything of that sort has been done, that will, to a certain extent, change my attitude; for I should believe there is some intention, some desire, on the part of Her Majesty's Government to withdraw from Egypt. But, so far as I know, nothing of the sort has been done, and I can only say that the statement of the right hon. Gentleman that we must remain in Egypt until we, in our own minds, are convinced that there is no danger of any Foreign Power going there is tantamount to saying that we shall remain there until doomsday, or until we are turned out. I notice that the organs of the Government complain of the statement of the right hon. Gentleman, and say that he ought boldly to have asserted that we are there, and, no matter what objections may be raised, we are going to remain there. At any rate, the statement of the right hon. Gentleman is most unsatisfactory as to any expectation that within a reasonable number of years our occupation will cease. Since these Estimates came before us there has been a great extension of our occupation in Egypt; the Soudan is being re-annexed under the auspices of Her Majesty's Government. So far as I can make out the answer given to me this afternoon, the Egyptian Government have no right to the Government of the Soudan; the sovereignty rests with the Sultan, and the Khedive has nothing to do with it; yet suddenly Egyptian troops go and annex a large portion of the Soudan for the benefit of the Sultan. That, of course, is not actually the case; part of the Soudan is annexed for the benefit of the Egyptian Government. Memories are short, so let me refer to what has taken place. No doubt Members do not remember the discussions of 1884. After the fall of Ismail the Soudan was a Province under the Khedive of Egypt. On Arabi's revolution there were disturbances in the Soudan, and the Egyptian troops had been withdrawn. There was a general state of revolution. Hicks Pasha went there with troops, and was defeated. Her Majesty's Government then disconnected themselves as much as possible from those proceedings. Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Cartwright at Cairo—

> "I notice in your Despatch that you enclose a telegram from General Hicks to Sir E. Malet on the subject of the military operations of the Soudan. It is unnecessary for me to repeat that Her Majesty's Government are in no way responsible for the operations in the Soudan, which had been undertaken under the authority of the Egyptian Government, or for the appointment or action of General Hicks."

There we have the fact that this Army was sent there without the approval or assent of Her Majesty's Government. Subsequently, in debate, Lord Granville said it was impossible for Her Majesty's Government to urge the Egyptian Government to give up the Soudan until some attempt had been made to settle the position there. The position in the Soudan in 1884 was this: Hicks Pasha was vanquished, the Mahdi was in possession of the Soudan, Gordon Pasha had been sent to Khartoum to withdraw the garrison, and an attempt was being made to relieve the garrisons of Tokar and Sinkat. It was then fully believed that the Egyptian Government were simply going to withdraw the garrisons from Tokar and Sinkat on the one side and Khartoum on the other, and that the exercise of Egyptian authority in the Soudan was to be limited to Suakin and Massowah. We may dismiss Massowah, for it is now practically in the hands of Italy. Her Majesty's Government made representations to the Khedival Government to induce them to abandon the Soudan. On January 9 Sir E. Baring sent the following telegram to Lord Granville:—

> "His Highness the Khedive said that he accepted cordially the policy of the abandonment of the whole of the Soudan."

That includes Tokar. We are told that the Soudan is a geographical expression, but the expression in the telegram includes the whole of the Soudan under Egyptian authority—so Tokar was included. The whole of the Soudan must be understood with the exception of Suakin on the Red Sea littoral, and the Eastern Soudan was included, where there has been the recent fighting. We have always claimed that the Egyptian flag shall fly over Suakin and Massowah, though I do not quite understand why. The argument for Suakin is that it is on the line of our communication with India, and that we ought to retain influence there, because we have expended a great deal of money to suppress the over-sea Slave Trade which has been carried on from Suakin. In any case, it was agreed that the Egyptian flag should fly over Suakin, but certain conditions were imposed. On February 19th the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale said—

> "We imposed a veto upon any attempt to re-conquer the Soudan, and when the Ministry of Cherif Pasha, after a period of hesitation, appeared to be disposed to adopt half measures—that is to say, that the re-conquest of the whole of the Soudan was impossible—it wished to retain a portion of it, which we advised them was far beyond their power, we imposed a veto on that policy, and we informed the Government that a Government of Egypt which relied on our support must in questions which are considered vital accept our advice or forfeit our support."

About this time Gordon Pasha was in Khartoum, and there was a small English garrison at Suakin, and a considerable force of Egyptian troops under Baker Pasha. Tokar and Sinkat were supposed to be held by Egyptian garrisons, and it was deemed reasonable that these garrisons should be relieved. It was determined to advance to relieve Tokar. Baker Pasha advanced to El Teb; he was defeated, and fell back on Suakin, which was attacked by Osman Digna. General Graham and 5,000 soldiers who had been intercepted on their way home from India were ordered to defend Suakin, which they did. They advanced to El Teb, and vanquished the forces of Osman Digna. Then they fell back upon Suakin. General Gordon objected in a telegram to that, and fully recognised not only that Eastern Soudan was a part of the Province of the Soudan, but that Tokar was a portion of the Province which the Egyptian Government had abandoned. He telegraphed—

> "About Tokar and Sinkat you can do nothing, except by proclaiming that the chiefs of tribes should come to Khartoum to Assembly of Notables, when the independence of the Soudan will be proclaimed."

He absolutely asked the British authorities at Suakin to ask the Notables at Tokar to join in the Assembly of Notables at Khartoum for the purpose of declaring that the whole of the Soudan was independent of Egypt. On March 6th the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale said—

> "General Graham has been directed not to undertake any operations at a considerable distance from Suakin. It is believed that the force under the command of Osman Digna is at a spot about 10 miles from Suakin. The force which General Graham found in position at El Teb was encamped at no distance from, but directly threatening, Suakin. Therefore, if that post was to be satisfactorily defended, it was absolutely necessary that General Graham should not retire in face of a victorious force in such a position, but that he should take efficient measures to defeat or disperse it at the spot where it was encamped."

My object is to show that the expedition was made with the simple object of freeing the approaches to the garrison of the presence of Osman Digna and his hordes. The noble Lord afterwards added—

> "There is every reason to hope that within a short period General Graham's force will have accomplished the purpose for which it was sent —that is to say, the relief of what remained of the garrison of Tokar and the effective protection of Suakin. When this is done I should be disposed to think that the retention of a force of any magnitude such as that at General Graham's command will be certainly unnecessary, and probably it will be easily in the power of the Navy to provide for the security of Suakin during the short interval which may elapse before the final decision is come to as to the permanent garrison—a garrison probably of moderate dimensions—by which Suakin will be held. We have no intention of undertaking any operations for the purpose of punishing or taking any revenge on Osman Digna. We have no intention of undertaking any operations for the purpose of exterminating or making war upon his adherents, so soon as they shall cease to menace the positions which we have announced our intention to maintain and to protect."

A few days ago I found to my horror from the accounts in the newspapers that there had been an advance of the Egyptians upon Tokar, accompanied, of course, by one of those abominable and horrible massacres of Dervishes which characterise these advances. Seven hundred out of 2,000 Dervishes were found dead on the field of battle, and no doubt very many were carried off by their friends, and have since died of their wounds. We may take it that one out of every two was killed, and on territory which no more belongs to the Khedive of Egypt than it does to me. I have knocked the bottom entirely out of the theory that these people are rebels against the Khedive, and the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has said we are to regard them as rebels against the Sultan. It practically amounts to this: that the Sultan has nothing whatever to do with it, and that the Egyptian Government, who have to do with it, are our dummies, and that we are violating our pledges to abandon the Soudan. The intentions of the Egyptian Government are apparently to lay hold of the oasis of Tokar, to establish a civil Government there, to establish a military force there, and to prevent Osman Digna and his people going back. There was a distinct understanding that the Egyptians should not stay there, and it is in violation of that understanding that they are endeavouring to annex the country now. The last news is that they are building a fort 12 miles south of Tokar, and situated in the midst of an extensive area of cultivated country, and that a telegraph line 55 miles long is recommended by the Sirdar. It is clear that a very considerable portion of the Eastern Soudan is occupied by the Egyptian Forces at the present moment, and that the intention is to remain there. Does the Government approve of this? It is quite contrary to the policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone), and to the opinions expressed by Members of the present Government when they were in opposition. There was unquestionably the strongest feeling against any attempt to re-acquire for the sake of Egypt, or for Egypt to attempt to acquire any portion of the Soudan. It may be asked, "How do you bring this into this Vote?" I answer, "In a simple way." We are responsible for these things; the Egyptian Government is nothing but our dummy. We forced our policy on the Egyptian Government. Perhaps the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in the present Government is not so strong as the Foreign Secretary in the former Government; but as we could force our will upon Egypt so far as an invasion of the Soudan was concerned formerly, so we are able to do it now. If we do not do so it is because we do not desire to do so. The Egyptian Army is officered by British officers. You may say they are not on the Estimates. Perhaps they are not, but how is it that that Army can go to the Soudan? The fact is, that the unfortunate British taxpayer has to pay for this Eastern Soudan expedition. We keep a garrison in Egypt of 3,300 men to maintain order, and this garrison enables the Egyptian troops, instead of remaining at Cairo and doing their primary duty, to go forth filibustering in the Soudan. Therefore, we are precisely as responsible for what occurs as if we had sent British soldiers there. If the Egyptian Army is really strong enough to maintain order it is not necessary for us to remain in Egypt. Therefore, I say that we are not only responsible for what occurs, but we are actually paying for it. If Osman Digna hangs about in the neighbourhood of Suakin, and you drive him off and occupy Tokar, 55 miles away, will he not hang about in the neighbourhood of Tokar, and will you not have to make a further advance? The right hon. Gentleman opposite scoffed at me the other night when I said that, and he declared that there was no place to which we could go. There is Kassala, and a straight road leading up to it. There is no desert there—at any rate, during a portion of the year; and I have no doubt that if the Government remains in the weak hands in which it is at present, just as they have allowed the Egyptians to lay hold of Tokar so they will allow them to lay hold of Kassala. And supposing the Egyptian troops should be defeated and driven back, first to Tokar, and thence to Suakin. Will the Secretary of State for War deny that his Government would not feel it incumbent on them to send a British Army to Suakin? There are in Egypt a great many influences at work—there is the Military Party, who think that they are bound in honour to re-acquire the Soudan, and there are the Egyptian Pashas, who not unnaturally have made a good thing out of the Soudan, amongst other things by the Slave Trade, and who are anxious to have the chance of it again. Then there is the Financial Party, who are interested in retaining us there, and who, therefore, will not be sorry if there are disturbances in the country which will render it difficult for us to leave. The Egyptians are in this position. They know very well that if a Liberal Government comes into power, Egypt will be evacuated in six months or a little more. ["No, no!"] Yes, I say this; there are so many on this side of the House in favour of Egypt being evacuated that (unless the Liberal Government were not a real Liberal Government, but was supported by hon. Members on the other side of the House against a majority on this side) if they did not leave Egypt in six months they would leave their offices. ["No, no!"] Hon. Members say "no." Why, I have voted a hundred times against the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian on these questions, but never succeeded in getting many to vote with me beyond a number of gentlemen from the opposite Benches who were influenced by factious motives. Now, however, go to any constituency you like and tell them you want to remain in Egypt, and if you are a Liberal they will have nothing to do with you. The pressure will be brought to bear by the constituencies upon Members on this side of the House. The Egyptians knowing this are doing everything they can to compromise the situation so that instead of withdrawing from Egypt we shall be obliged, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has observed year after year, to remain there. I know that the right hon. Gentleman's most anxious wish and desire is—and I have heard him say so a dozen times—to withdraw from Egypt. Under the circumstances, I think the matter ought to be thoroughly debated. I think it ought to be frequently debated, and for my own part whenever I see Votes proposed which, directly or indirectly, are intended to maintain our position in Egypt, I shall move Amendments and make speeches, and ask Members who agree with me to vote with me. To bring home the facts to the minds of hon. and right hon. Gentlemen it is necessary to recur to them again and again. In the year 1884 the country was in a great state of excitement and indignation at the massacres which took place of thousands of dervishes. Now we have another massacre of 700 dervishes—a circumstance which the country has not yet thoroughly realised. If this annexation takes place it will not merely be hundreds who will lose their lives, but thousands—and thousands of men who, as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has said, are rightly struggling to be free. I shall support every Amendment to these Votes, from whichever quarter of the House they come.

The CHAIRMAN: There is now no Amendment before the Committee.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I beg to move to reduce the Vote by £100,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That '£5,532,700' be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

*(7.52.) Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): The other night we dealt with the Vote for the number of men employed in Egypt, and I will not go over that ground again now. I think we

might now with great advantage withdraw from Egypt, and from the contingencies which may arise so long as our occupation continues. The point I wish to address myself to is this: that if we are to keep troops in Egypt, Egypt ought to pay for them, as India pays for the troops there. Egypt pays only a small subsidy towards the expense of the British troops. Is India treated in that way? Far from it. India pays not only local but also extraordinary expenses, and the utmost farthing of incidental expenses. The cost of our troops in this country and the colonies, including officers, Secretary of State for War, and all, is about £118 per head, and including barracks it will come to quite £125. In India, with the higher pay given to officers, it will undoubtedly come to £150 per man. Egypt pays £232,000 for 3,200 men, which is only about £70 per head, whereas the real expense to the British taxpayer must be more than £125 per man, as we have to add the cost of armaments, accoutrements, barracks, hospitals, stores, recruiting expenses, headquarters, administrative expenses, transports, and so on. I shall be glad if the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War will tell us whether those figures are right or not. I think it is a very heavy expenditure, and I do not think any reason is shown for it. Why do you not apply to the case of India the arguments with which you seek to justify the small charge you make to Egypt? The sending out of troops to Egypt disturbs our military arrangements at home. You cannot keep half the battalions at home and send half abroad. You have to send out more than half the battalions, rather the battalions at home are emasculated. The best troops are sent abroad and the invalids and recruits are kept at home. We were told that Egypt is heavily burdened with debt and cannot afford to pay what she ought, and that, therefore, the British taxpayer must meet the charges. But what is the real state of the case? The financial advisers of the Egyptian Government tell us that they are not only paying their way in that country but establishing a considerable surplus. If that is so, why should not the Egyptian Government defray all these military expenses without involving the British taxpayer in the heavy burdens I have described? My hon. Friend the Member for Northampton has supplied the reason, which is that the moment you have restored order to Egypt, instead of trying to do justice to the British taxpayer by withdrawing your troops, you allow the Egyptian Government to indulge in the commencement of a fresh conquest of the Soudan, and that is the reason why your troops are now chained, as it were, to Cairo, and why we are in our present position. It may be true that we have arrived at a better state of things in Egypt than hitherto. We have restored peace and we have disciplined the Egyptian Army; but at the same time, owing to the aggressive operations in the Tokar district and on the Suakin frontier, we have felt it necessary to occupy the whole of that part of the Soudan territory. The consequence must be that you will have to maintain a strong brigade at Tokar of probably three or four battalions, because you cannot defend the district between that place and Suakin with a smaller force, and it is extremely probable that you will ultimately be obliged to send up a large number of British troops in support of that Tokar garrison. In that case you will have to send more troops from Malta and Gibraltar, which are practically the reserves of the British Army in Egypt, and in this way there will be no end to the expense to which this country will be put. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has told us that the Egyptian sovereignty over the Soudan is not abandoned. I am very sorry to hear this, because it means that we have undertaken vast liabilities which may give rise to all the mischief and extravagance pointed out by the hon. Member for Northampton. I may say that I am very much surprised at this announcement, because, as I have repeatedly said in this House, I have great confidence in the wisdom and judgment of the noble Lord the Foreign Secretary. I was therefore exceedingly puzzled when I heard that after the Soudan was supposed to have settled down in native hands for a number of years, we should at the last moment be told that the Egyptian Sovereignty over a vast region of the Soudan is not to be abandoned. I confess that I cannot understand it. I do not think that Lord Salisbury is a man who is likely to give in to a few officers at Suakin who wish to revenge themselves upon the police who follow our defeated friendlies right up to the walls of that place. I am afraid there is some deeper motive, which is either that it is necessary to conciliate the Egyptian Government in order to induce Riaz Pasha to give Egypt over to us, or that there may be such an idea as that suggested by the French of reviving the Empire of Sesostris by obtaining control over the whole of the territory which is to be acquired by the East Africa Company from Lake Victoria and the sources of the Nile, and bringing it down to a point at which it will adjoin the region occupied by British forces at Kassala and Suakin. I repeat, because I regard Lord Salisbury as a prudent man who has hitherto shown no disposition for rash enterprises, that I cannot help thinking the motive for re-occupying this portion of the Soudan is something more than that of reclaiming Egyptian Sovereignty over the Tokar region. Believing, therefore, that there is something behind which may involve this country in great liabilities which ought not to be undertaken by us, I beg to support the Motion of my hon. Friend for the reduction of this vote.

(8.5.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): I wish to say a few words in supporting the Amendment of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton. In so doing I would remind the House that there is a certain sum of £250,000 charged on the British taxpayer for the Army of Occupation in Egypt; but I was told by the Secretary for War that in reality the British taxpayer paid nothing at all for that Army of Occupation. He said we required a certain number of troops, and that whether they were in Cork or Edinburgh, Aldershot or Egypt, made no difference. We required the men, and must support them wherever they were, so that if we kept them in Egypt we had only to pay for them there as we should have to do if they were maintained anywhere else. This would have been a good reply had it been accurate; but I doubt its accuracy. For instance, I find that in three of our Crown Colonies, the Mauritius, Ceylon and the Straits Settlement, we have about the same number of men that we have in Egypt, so that if this theory were sound the cost would be pretty much the same; but the fact is that we charge the Governments of the Crown Colonies of Ceylon and the Mauritius, omitting the Straits Settlement, over £200,000 for the troops we maintain there, whereas in Egypt we are only charging the Egyptian Government £80,000. I understood the Financial Secretary (Mr. Jackson) to say that the reason why £80,000 was charged in Egypt was because the battalions there had to be increased from 720 to 801, and that Egypt had to pay the difference; but I want to know why Egypt should pay the difference, because if you want so many men it can be a matter of no importance where they are. I have as yet had no satisfactory reply from the Government, and unless I do get one that is satisfactory I shall go to a Division. It is quite certain to my mind that one of two things must be the case; either Egypt is not paying sufficient, or we are overcharging the Crown Colonies I have named. With regard to the general question before the Committee, I should like to ask a question or two. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War whether he intends to have a railway constructed from Suakin to Sinkat; because you will want Sinkat ultimately, and must have a garrison there, inasmuch at it lies amongst the hills and is necessary to the health of our troops during the hot season. Moreover, it will be necessary if you maintain a garrison at Tokar, to have a railway there, otherwise the convoys might be cut off between Tokar and Suakin; and supposing you have the railway at Tokar, why should you not go on to Kassala and Berber? I must say that so far as the Egyptians are concerned, there is a good deal to be advanced in defence of a forward policy. They depend upon the Nile; and if the people living in the upper regions adjacent to that river are to divert it for irrigation or for other purposes, Egypt will necessarily suffer. Thus you see that the further you go into the Soudan, the more arguments you find for extending your progress still further; and that process will go on until at last you will have acquired the whole of the Soudan. But it seems useless to question the Government on this subject. They do not know anything. They do not know whether there has been any declaration of war. All they seem to know is that the dominions of the Soudan are still a portion of the Sultan's sovereignty. If it is intended to occupy the whole of the Soudan territory, why should you not carry the doctrine still further, and apply it to the French, turning them out of Algiers and Tunis? I regret that we have not been able to extract any information on these points from Her Majesty's Government. We now see that our troops have been attacking those of the *de facto* Government of the Soudan territory adjacent to Suakin. In doing this, I say we have been guilty of carrying out a high handed and a filibustering policy, and I hope that this House will no longer sanction such a course. Egypt is said to be in a prosperous position; and, therefore, I do not see why we should be called upon to pay this money.

(8.15.) MR. E. STANHOPE: The hon. Member has put to me several questions and it is only right I should rise to answer them. His first question was, "Why should we pay the whole cost of the Army when we make some of the Crown Colonies pay the whole cost of the troops maintained in those Colonies"? The answer is perfectly clear. If we left Egypt the 3,000 troops we maintain there would not be disbanded; we should use them for our general purposes. At present, in Egypt, we are only carrying on from hand to mouth, believing that the time will come when we will be able to withdraw the troops for the general purposes of the country. When you come to the Crown Colonies the case is altogether different. We actually raise troops for the purpose of defending those colonies; they appear on the Army Estimates, and we get the money from the Colonial Government. Where we garrison distant coaling stations, it is difficult to call upon those colonies to pay the whole cost, but as much as they can afford. The cases are wholly different, and there is no analogy between them. The hon. Member asks what we propose to do with regard to Tokar. There is not the smallest suggestion of making a railway there. We have yielded to the strong representation of the Egyptian Government that their frontier should be extended in that direction. The hon. Member for Northampton admits that he has made 201 speeches on this subject. I myself can assure him that I have heard him make the same speech 30 times, and that he has used almost the identical words. The Committee will not be surprised, therefore, that I have nothing to add to the answers I have already given, and that I decline to re-open the political question of the occupation of Egypt or the expedition to the Soudan. The argument of the hon. Member is that we ought to leave Egypt at the earliest possible moment, and leave her to carry on her own affairs. And we are actually to begin with the process of telling Egypt that she may not undertake operations for her own defence, though the Government thinks them essential. When the time comes to leave Egypt, you are to turn to her and say, "It is not necessary to make on your frontier proper provision for your defence." We have been attacking a hostile tribe of dervishes who have been attacking the Egyptians at Suakin. We have no desire to interfere with the native tribes in the neighbourhood; on the contrary, we desire to encourage them to assist the Egyptian Government in carrying on the government of the country around Suakin. We certainly have no intention whatever of re-conquering the Soudan, nor have we any intention of interfering with the Egyptian Government in taking steps that are necessary to her security. With these assurances I hope the Committee, if we go to a Division, will support the Government in doing what is for the interest of Egypt.

*(8.22.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I entirely differ from the view of the right hon. Gentleman. Egypt, with a quiet population and a large revenue, might succeed in self-government, but the Egyptians are not capable of governing the Soudan, inhabited by warlike tribes, and with little revenue and small means. It was the prudent policy of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian to abandon the Soudan, as the Egyptians were not fitted to govern that country. The Secretary for War said

that if we trusted Egypt we should leave the Egyptians free to occupy the Soudan.

MR. E. STANHOPE: I never said that. I said we should leave them free to give attention to their own frontiers.

*SIR G. CAMPBELL: I contend that, if the Egyptians continue in the Soudan, and the tribes are moved to reprisals, they will have to remain there, and they will have to occupy the whole district. I think you had much better draw the line at Egypt proper, leaving them as the utmost hope, to govern themselves, but never deeming them able to govern other people.

(8.25.) MR. S. STOREY (Sunderland): When the hon. Member says that it is the policy of Egyptians not to go outside Egypt, I am afraid he has not met those officials in the full pride of official costume, but in circumstances and places of a more pleasant character. If he had seen them officially he would probably have ascertained what is the prevailing opinion of Egyptian officers, who, almost to a man, are in favour of extending the bounds of Egypt. Their conviction was that they should sustain Anouan by going to Dongola, Suakin by going to Tokar, and Tokar by going to Berber, and Kassala. I opposed this occupation of Egypt from the first. I have not made 201 speeches about it, but I have spoken eight or nine times in six or seven years against the occupation of Egypt, and against the projection of British arms into the Soudan. Formally, I must make my protest against this projection of Egyptian arms some distance into the Soudan, because I know it carries out the hidden intentions of the Pashas, who, when we leave Egypt, will be the masters. Their conviction is that they ought to have the whole territory which belonged to Egypt 15, 20, or 30 years ago. It is because the little movement at Tokar is as the beginning of the letting out of water that I am disposed to take objection to a matter which may appear extremely trivial. Somebody on the Treasury Bench talked as if Tokar were a fertile oasis. What nonsense. Why, there are a hundred more fertile oases around Egypt. It was not Suakin or the defeat of Osman Digna, but the carrying out of a secret policy of the Turkish Pashas that was fought in going to Tokar under the cover of English guns and the leadership of English officers. I am one of those who wish England to leave Egypt. When it was said that we would leave her to manage her own affairs I never believed it from the first. I remember warning the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Gladstone) that if we went to Egypt we would have to stay there. With every step we take forward we add to our responsibilities. I am not one of those who condemn the Tory Government for not doing that which the Liberal Government did not do. I have been in Egypt on more than one occasion, and if the opportunity were a proper one I would say to the House that, although I opposed the original occupation, and although I still feel that there are important interests which make it desirable that we should get out of it as soon as possible, yet it is impossible to deny that the occupation of Egypt by England has been productive in more than half a dozen directions of great, and I hope permanent, advantage to the Egyptians. For my part, although, as hon. Members know, I am not fond of officials or of officialdom, yet when I was in Egypt it was my good fortune to meet a great many gentlemen who are concerned in carrying on practical works in that country, and a more self-sacrificing and a more successful body of public servants was, I believe, never possessed by any Government on this globe. What they have done in increasing the cultivable territory would alone suffice to justify a great deal of affection on the part of intelligent Egyptians for the English. I freely admit that all our officials there have done their duty, and more than their duty. But while I say that our occupation has been useful and advantageous to the Egyptians, I must at the same time draw this distinction that every step we take forward towards mastering the control of Egyptian affairs render the Egyptian people, and Egyptian officials, less capable of undertaking the management of their own affairs. That is a deadly evil we have before us, I fear, from the fact we have gone there that we shall never get out of it, and it is because I feel that, and because I object to it, that I want to diminish as far as possible the chances of our continuing in that country. This I know, that the further Egypt advances into the Soudan, the more the Egyptian Government enlarges its responsibility there, the more will it depend upon the British Government which is behind it; and the less the Egyptian Government is permitted to mix itself up in the affairs of the Soudan, the better will be our chance of escaping from our untenable position. Therefore I have joined with my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, and shall continue to join with him in pressing upon the Government the extreme impolicy of giving to these Pashas any free hand whatsoever. It is of no use saying that the Military Authorities recommended this advance. I do not think that military men in Egypt, except for the flurry of engagement, would care in the slightest degree about advancing into the Soudan. It is the Pashas and perhaps behind them the Khedive who advocates this; it is men who want to live in the history of the country as having been responsible for advancing its frontiers, and it is because I believe that if they are permitted to do it they will draw the British Government insensibly on from one project to another until they commit themselves to the re-conquest of Berber that I am now making the strongest protest I can against the re-occupation of Tokar. In this House, unfortunately, very little notice is taken when hundreds of men are slain; they are said to be only Dervishes; they are what the Government are pleased to call rebels, though I always feel when I hear an English gentleman thus stigmatise them that he is guilty of insolence, for they are in no sense rebels, simply because the Sultan of Turkey, sitting at Constantinople—or rather lying there—chooses to pretend that he has territorial rights over the Soudan; that simply because the people of the Soudan choose to manage their own affairs, men in England talk glibly about the Dervishes being rebels. I deny the applicability of the term. In no English sense can they be called rebels, and then to declaim about the necessity of this advance in the interest of the protection of the Egyptian ports is all nonsense. I always notice that when we deal with matters such as these some official or other discovers the place to be of immense importance. I say that if you left Suakin, Egypt would not be merely as strong, but stronger, for the permanent object which we have in view. If you allow Egypt to retreat upon herself, she would be an area easily governable, absolutely controllable, and easily defended; while every day the possibility of our leaving the country would increase. But if you allow these Pashas to control you, and compel you to undertake one expedition after another, you will end at last with exhausting the resources of Egypt, and you will be compelled to remain then in your own interest, and have permanently to hold possession of the country for the sake of your honour and credit. I, therefore, feel I must join in the protest against the recent advance on Tokar, and against our continued occupation of Egypt. If the right hon. Gentleman had assured us the Government would do as Sir Evelyn Baring committed us to do four or five years ago, I would have said: "Very well, I think the present condition of Egypt is such, and the signs of improvement are such, that you have made out a good case for a further continuance of your stay." But if the Government will not do that, if it will lay itself open, as in this case, to be induced by the Pashas to pass on to other exploits, which involve slaughter of the Dervishes and then permanent occupation of the country, accompanied by ill blood between ourselves and other Powers, I feel bound to protest. I know that the services we have rendered Egypt have been of great advantage to the Egyptian people, but I am sure that the international evils which would follow upon our continued occupation would more than counterbalance those advantages, and I venture to point out that one effect would be to bring us close to territory likely to come under Russian dominion. I believe we can only come out of Egypt, if at all, by minimising the responsibilities of the Egyptian Government, by curtailing its territory, and resisting her leaders from undertaking expeditions to the South. I say that if we allow these, whatever may be the intentions of the Government, there will be no escaping the duty of permanently occupying Egypt. I therefore think we ought not to have permitted the advance on Tokar. It would be better to curtail the ambitions of these Pashas, and make them devote themselves to improving the condition of the population, reforming their judicial system, and educating their people. If that policy were pursued, then the necessity for our remaining there would gradually disappear, and Egypt could be left to work out her own destiny. Whatever may be the result of the present Vote, the permanent policy of this country—whether the Liberal or Conservative Party be in power—should be to limit the ambition of the Egyptian Pashas and to take the earliest opportunity of honourably escaping from our unfortunate and untenable position in Egypt. (8.25.)

(9.24.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present: House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

(9.25.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman has given us a fair explanation of the reasons why we are going to take the Eastern Soudan. No doubt, the right hon. Baronet the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will address the Committee, and I ask him to make a full statement of the arrangements with the Egyptian Government. We wish to know, for instance, whether the recent military operations have been undertaken with the consent and at the desire of the Sultan, and whether it is intended to absolutely reverse the policy laid down by the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (the Marquess of Hartington) as to the abandonment of the Soudan. Are we to understand that the province of Tokar is to be seized; is there to be an Egyptian civil and military Government there? Have the Government taken into consideration the great contingency there is of these Dervishes drawing the Egyptians into a real war with the Soudanese, in which we shall have to go to their aid? It must be remembered that the Soudanese strongly object to our holding Suakin. Undoubtedly, they have not engaged in military operations of late against Suakin, but I have no doubt they are very disagreeable neighbours. There is the widest difference between holding Suakin alone, and holding this large territory. What is being done must inevitably get us into great difficulty, unless we have a clear understanding. It may be said I am pressing this unduly, but in 1884 there were debates which were continued day after day. The country was horrified at the massacres which took place there. We have had a similar massacre now, but there is this difference between the two years—that whereas then the troops returned and it was said there was no intention of laying hold of any portion of the Eastern Soudan, now we have the massacre followed by the Egyptian troops seizing or annexing a very considerable tract of the Soudan, which is claimed, rightly or wrongly, by the Dervishes to belong to them. I do trust we shall have some sort of statement as to what is really intended.

*(9.29.) COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, S.W., Ince): Every military man who heard the statement made by the Government at the time of General Grenfell's action, that we were to hold Suakin by itself, knew that it was a dangerous statement to make, because there is no such thing as a passive defence. Any General defending Suakin ought to have full liberty to hold a certain zone of the territory around it, so that an enemy should not be allowed to come up to it at all. Full liberty should be allowed to the commanding officer defending Suakin to occupy and hold the country near, in order to secure that town from attack by an enemy.

(9.30.) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): This is a short but expressive statement from a supporter of the Government. But we may ask where, in the name of common sense, is this region of attack to end. We were told not so long ago by Her Majesty's Government that the occupation of Egypt is to continue to a remote period. Then again we are told that the possession of Suakin is indispensable as part of our policy. It is of no practical use to England as a military station, but our holding it or Egypt holding it constitutes a sort of sore on the surface of that part of the world, it provokes irritation among the natives; and how long is this to continue? We are to have an extension of telegraphic communication, and other expenses are to be incurred in connection with a district which is of no good to the country, and has no advantage really from a military point of view. I really cannot help supposing that this is only one of the many methods made use of by Her Majesty's present advisers to provide posts for the assistance of impecunious relatives. If we accept the doctrine of the hon. and gallant Gentleman who has just spoken, it must lead to the permanent occupation of the whole African coast until we find ourselves on the boundaries of another European Power. Really I think we ought to have some substantial declaration from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War. When will the limit be reached of this systematic land-grabbing of the territories of free people? As far as in me lies I must protest against this wasteful, foolish system. I do not quite agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland that the permanent occupation of Egypt will bring about a conflict of British and Russian interests; the place where we are likely to feel any difficulty on that account is the Indian North-western frontier. But I merely want to press for an answer from the right hon. Gentleman, and it cannot be matter of surprise that we are not satisfied with a bald statement from the responsible Minister when we are asked to vote this very large amount of money.

(9.35.) Mr. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I feel bound to join in offering this protest against the whole of this Egyptian business. I have not been in the House through the whole of the discussions, and therefore I do not know whether this point has been alluded to. It is acknowledged that we have a certain amount of responsibility for the action of the Egyptian Government, and when we see that English officers lead the Egyptian troops in these expeditions it is assumed by the people that these expeditions are undertaken upon instructions from the English Government. As a matter of fact it is the English Government promoting these attacks, because by the presence of our troops in Egypt we liberate a certain number of Egyptian troops for the purpose. The speech of the hon. and gallant Member has let the cat out of the bag, and shows the real position—that, once established anywhere, we must then go a step further; and that is what is indicated by what we are told about telegraphs and other arrangements. I suppose the Egyptian Government now hope that all is to be recovered in the Soudan. Again and again have we asked what is going to be done in the country, and the answers we have received are examples of what out of doors we should call downright shuffling. I am not fully posted up in all the details of this question, and have no desire to take up time, but I must join in the protest of my hon. Friend.

(9.40.) Mr. E. STANHOPE: I hope we may now be allowed to come to a decision, for it is clear we are discussing over again exactly the question that was discussed at the last sitting on the Army Estimates. I have this evening again answered the observations of the hon. Member for Northampton, who, however, did not do me the favour of remaining in the House to hear my reply.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I was absent swallowing a hasty cup of tea, but I know what the right hon. Gentleman said; a friend of mine has told me.

Mr. E. STANHOPE: Then we have had a speech from the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell), who never fails to give us the benefit of his views on this subject. No one can deny that the speeches of to-night have been but a *réchauffé* of the last Debate on the subject; no additional fact or argument has been adduced. I did not wish to curtail legitimate discussion in the least degree, but I must earnestly appeal to the Committee to pass from this to the next Vote in the Estimates, which raises more important matters than this.

(9.41.) Mr. STOREY: The right hon. Gentleman thinks there are more important matters to discuss on the next Votes, but I venture to differ from him, because in this question the honour of this country and the honour of the Government are involved: the honour of the country because we have pledged ourselves to Europe that we will at a convenient time come out of Egypt, and we on this side hold that the further you advance into the Soudan the more you retard the time of our departure from Egypt—the honour of the Government of this country because the foreign policy of our Government is supposed to be continuous, and the late Government was pledged up to the eyes to retire from Egypt at the first convenient opportunity. What we urge here, and what we mean to urge throughout the country is that by permitting themselves to be seduced into military proceedings in the Soudan the Government are practically eating their pledges and putting off to the Greek Kalends the time when we can honourably retire from Egypt. The right hon. Gentleman thinks the time has arrived for us to come to a decision and that we have put no new facts before the Committee. The Committee? What is the use of putting facts before empty benches with neither heads or hearts or intelligence? Wood and leather have we been addressing our arguments to, interspersed here and there with a representative of the Government or the Treasury Bench. An audience of five or six gentlemen have we had opposite. We might as well talk to leather and wood as talk to the intelligence and endeavour to pierce the pachydermatous skins of Her Majesty's Government. Now they invite us to come to a Division, and that means that, having exhausted argument, and made convincing speeches to which they have made no reply, we are to be met by numbers and voted down. Beaten on a Division we know we shall be — beaten in argument the Government are. The Financial Secretary smiles at the idea, but I invite him to rise and give us some tangible defence in regard to the matter we are contesting. We say the Government by meekly permitting the Egyptians to go to Tokar, innocently I will admit, without any desire of their own, but unfortunately for us and for Egpyt, are provoking another war in the Soudan and delaying our departure from Egypt. One point there is which has not been dwelt upon in these discussions. We allege that these advances in the Soudan are prompted by the ambition of the Egyptian Pashas and by the influence of the Military Authorities anxious to gain a little military glory at the expense of the half-armed Soudanese. But how far do these schemes of conquest and annexation, apart from military spirit and the greed of the Pashas, originate in those financial circles whence came the hateful influence which induced the late Government to embark on their disastrous career in the Soudan? All of us who were Members of this House in 1882 know that we went to Egypt in the interest of the bondholders, not because the honour of England was involved or the safety of Egpyt at stake, but to save the pockets of the financiers whose influence is now felt by those who hold high places on the Treasury Bench. This financial influence projected the Egyptian policy of the late Government, and have we not now the same cabals, the same schemes, the same inspired newspaper paragraphs, the same direct and indirect efforts on the minds and inclinations of the governing authorities in Egypt and at home for the purpose of permanently securing those financial interests, which would have been destroyed if we had not gone to Egypt, and which everybody knows will be jeopardised if we leave Egypt. How to keep up the English occupation is the constant endeavour of the bondholders, and so it is that these ideas of exploiting the Soudanese are fostered, that the difficulties arising may prolong our occupation of Egpyt. We do not mean to divide until we have had some more definite engagement than we have yet secured. We are not going to permit the blood of Egyptians or Englishmen or Soudanese to be spilt time after time—and these occurrences the Recording Angel must have written with a double-dyed pen—without impressing upon the Government that it was by weakness the Liberal Government entered on these projects in the past; and that it is by weakness the present Government are being led on to a war which is likely to be conducted in a manner to cause permanent mischief to Egypt. The hon. Member for Carlisle thinks these enterprises have been entered upon not through weakness, but through wickedness. I do not think the Government of 1882 had wickedness in its composition or purposes. If it had, those who composed that Government have shed it or got rid of it since. For my part I believe it was weakly led on step by step until events culminated in the wicked bombardment of Alexandria, and a war which, though not productive of much loss of life, yet was productive of much suffering to Egypt. It is by weakness that the present Government has been led on. You had Alexandria, Tel-el-Kebir, and Khartoum to record against the last Government; what have you against the present Government? I cannot remember the petty names, for the Government has done nothing great, but the records show that they have been going on foolishly from one petty conflict to another and sacrificing with no permanent effect the lives of men belonging to three nations. And that is going to continue to be done; I can see it from their present policy. They will go to Tokar and, if permitted to remain there, a few months hence they will discover another oasis beyond Tokar. Some military gentlemen or some enterprising Pasha who wants to distinguish himself will discover, 30 or 40 miles from Tokar, another oasis. Having found that Suakin could be best defended from Tokar, it will then be said that Tokar can be best defended from this other oasis, and advances will be made in one direction upon Kassala and in another direction upon Berber, and this country will be committed in "honour" to projects which will involve the reconquest of the Soudan, or, at all events, the Nile portion of it. It is because our past experience has made us jealous and has prevented us from putting confidence in the promises of Governments—knowing how their promises are falsified—that we make protests against these military projects. For the reasons I have given I have felt it my duty to renew the protests made by the hon. Member for Northampton and the hon. Member for Caithness, and I would ask from the Treasury Bench some declaration to the effect that for the future this country shall not be committed to pledges of conquest in the Soudan for the purpose of giving security to the dividends of the bondholders, and with the result of continuing to an unknown date the occupation of Egypt.

*(10.7.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I can understand the anxiety of the Minister for War to get this Vote. I suppose this is what he would call the dangerous part of the Army Estimates, and that he thinks that if he can get this item he will be able to go on for another twelve months exploiting in the Soudan, and bringing about further annexation. As I understand it, we want an answer on two points from the Secretary for War and from the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. We want to know when the Government are going to leave Egypt for good, and whether they intend to re-conquer the Soudan. I could quite understand the Government saying candidly that they mean, as far as they are concerned, retaining possession of the Soudan, and to go on conquering and re-conquering as much territory as possible. I was not a Member of the House in 1882, when these proceedings commenced, but outside the House, in connection with political associations, I have always opposed this occupation of Egypt and this interference with the Egyptian people. I have no hesitation in saying—for this is not a political matter—that I objected even more strongly to the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian than I do to the action of the present Government in continuing the occupation of Egypt. It was a mistake to go there in the first instance. I believe the late Government meant to retire as soon as they could, but what do the present Government mean? Why do they not say they mean to leave by a certain date, and why do they go to Tokar at all? I cannot see that it is of any use at all, unless it is intended to go further and conquer more territory. To my mind, we have no right to interfere with the Soudanese, who we were told were a people "rightly struggling to be free." Another strong objection I have to these proceedings is that they annoy and irritate the French people. It may be that the Government desire to annoy the French people and their Government. I know they do not like a Republic, but I cannot help that. My point is that we have no right to irritate neighbours with whom we should live on terms of amity and good feeling. Besides, we are likely to suffer by giving this annoyance in Newfoundland and elsewhere. Having promised the French Government that we would retire from Egypt, why should we not do so honestly and as quickly as possible. So long as I am a Member of this House I shall vote against spending money on these

Egyptian affairs, and I now give my hearty support to the Amendment.

*(10.14.) MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War complained a short time ago that all that was said from this side of the House was in the nature of reiteration of matter already uttered in previous Debates. I think, whatever may be my feebleness and defects I shall be able to contribute, if allowed by the Chair, to the information which ought to be placed before the House concerning matters which hitherto have not been mentioned. The hon. Member for Sunderland maintained—and I think rightly maintained—that the cause of all the difficulty in which this country has been involved was our original advent into Egypt through means which we all know, namely, the bombardment of Alexandria. I have no doubt that many Members of the House would be glad to consider that that was entirely ancient history. For my own part I cannot consider that it is ancient history until the last corporal's guard of the British Army has evacuated Egypt. The occupation of Egypt was not the doing of the present Government. The events I am about to mention, they were not, at all events directly, responsible for, and they may even have forgotten some of them, miserable as they were. The first of these events was this: We went to Egypt without any declaration of war violating in that respect, the law of nations. We also invaded Egypt absolutely without permission of the English Cabinet.

THE CHAIRMAN: I do not see the relevancy of this at all.

*MR. KEAY: I submit to your ruling, Sir, but I am only taking the historical latitude which was accorded to other speakers.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member did not understand the argument of the hon. Member for Sunderland. The hon. Member for Sunderland suggested motives for the present position in Egypt.

*MR. KEAY: I am alluding to the hon. Member for Northampton when he went over the history of the case. I wish to show that we went to Egypt merely through the action of officials.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

*MR. KEAY: Then I cannot pursue that part of the subject. The next point which I have in my mind is the devastating effect which our action has had on Egypt, inasmuch as through our very first act the whole civil population of Alexandria disappeared at the time of the bombardment, and has never been heard of more.

THE CHAIRMAN: This is far too remote from the subject now before the Committee.

*MR. KEAY: I can only obey the ruling of the Chair. I do not know whether it will be in order to mention that I have heard questions put in this House as to the fact of the disappearance of these people.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

*MR. KEAY: I suppose I must understand that the history of the causes which led to our occupation of Egypt is not to be discussed on this occasion. I will, therefore, confine myself to a few remarks as to the financial question. I contend that the financial position in Egypt is such that either this reduction should be passed, and the Egyptian Government should pay the extra expense of our troops out of their own surplus, or else that Her Majesty's Government should prove to the Committee that there is some British reason why the British taxpayer should be mulcted in the amount now asked for. From the examination I have made of Egyptian affairs, I cannot congratulate either the late Government or the present Government upon any real improvement in Egyptian finance. I do not deny that they have, by hook or by crook, extorted from the Egyptian peasantry a large amount of revenue by their scientific system—because I must confess that the British revenue system is, so far as exaction is concerned, a very scientific system of extortion. They have succeeded in extorting from the Egyptian fellaheen all that was obtainable before the war, and a large sum in addition for the maintenance of British soldiers and British Departments. The surplus which is spoken of in connection with Egyptian finance clearly owes its existence to severer revenue laws, and severer extortion from the unfortunate cultivators of the country. I cannot understand — taking even the official view of the matter—how anyone can maintain that the surplus has not been obtained by extortion. If the surplus had been due to the increased prosperity of the country, we should have had some proposal to relieve the British taxpayer of, at any rate, a part of the burden of this Vote. These are my reasons for—as far as your ruling, Sir, will allow me—saying that I shall certainly record my protest against the passing of this Vote.

(10.23.) Mr. JOHNSTON rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put;" but the CHAIRMAN withheld his assent, and declined then to put that Question.

Debate resumed.

SIR W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): It has been complained that we sometimes speak twice on this side. Well, Sir, I have not yet spoken on the subject which I take to be the question of our occupation of Egypt and whether certain contingencies of an evil nature in the Soudan do not arise from that occupation. I am surprised to hear a right hon. Gentleman opposite say that there are more important questions to be discussed than this. I do not think there could be a more important question discussed than this. Nobody can have forgotten how we went on and on, and employed our Fleets, Armies, in stifling Home Rule in Egypt, merely for the sake of securing the extortionate profits of a few bondholders. Can there be anything on which it is more important for everybody in this House to do all that within them lies to prevent the renewal of such crimes as have occurred. You may have a renewal of one of the greatest international outrages of the century—a foul blot on the record of the Liberal Party. The occupation of Egypt to my mind was commenced in outrage and carried on with fraud. It was to the everlasting shame of the Liberal Party that they carried out these proceedings, and I am glad to see that some of the Pashas of that Party have now arrived. I hope that they will tell the Committee that they are as much opposed to this forward policy in Egypt as any of those who sit below the Gangway. Why have our soldiers been kept in Egypt? Have we not been told over and over again that they were only to be kept there until order was established; and are we not told that order has been established, and that everything is now going on happily? Why are you keeping your soldiers there? I can do nothing but repeat the question as the right hon. Gentleman opposite has said, and I do so because it is never answered. The only possible excuse for keeping up this expenditure is that you want to do something or other in the Soudan. That is no excuse. I sit down by asking the right hon. Gentleman to answer one question, and if he will answer it in a straightforward manner it will be simplifying matters a good deal. I want to know whether the Government adhere to the policy laid down in the Despatch of January 8th, 1884, by Sir Evelyn Baring, who said that the Khedive accepted a gradual policy of abandonment of the whole of the Soudan, which he believed on mature reflection to be for the best interests of the country. I want a straightforward answer to the question: Have the Government abandoned the policy of ruling the Soudan or have they not? If we got a straightforward answer to the question we could not have a surer ground. I feel sure the right hon. Gentleman will be glad to give us that answer.

Mr. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

(10.30.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 135; Noes 68.—(Div. List, No. 74.)

Question put accordingly, "That '£5,532,700' be granted for the said Services."

(10.45.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 65; Noes 140.—(Div. List, No. 75.)

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): Mr. Courtney, I have to state that by accident I have been excluded from voting. I was in the Lobby at the time of the Division writing a letter, and my vote was not recorded.

THE CHAIRMAN: Did the hon. Member hear the question put?

MR. CONYBEARE: Yes, Sir.

THE CHAIRMAN: Then the hon. Member ought to have voted.

Original Question again proposed.

(10.52) SIR W. LAWSON: I move, Sir, that you do now report Progress, and ask leave to sit again, and I will give my reasons for so doing. I think that this is a most extraordinary way of voting national supplies. We have been discussing as important a question as it is possible to discuss, namely, the policy of this country in Egypt. Hardly anybody on the other side of the House came to hear or take part in the discussion, but all of a sudden in comes the First Lord of the Treasury, and without having listened to the Debate for five minutes—I do not think the right hon. Gentleman even heard my speech—he gets up and moves that the question be now put. The Government even refused to answer a question I put. I put it seriously, respectfully, and earnestly, a question which arose out of the discussion then going on, namely, the policy of the Government in the Soudan, which is the cause of the necessity for voting this number of men and the amount of money asked for. I put the question seriously to the right hon. Gentleman the Minister for War, and directly I sat down, having asked the question, up jumped the First Lord of the Treasury and moved that the question be now put. Was anybody ever answered in that way in the House before? More than that; I happen to know that others wish to take part in the Debate and express their opinions on the Egyptian policy of the Government. In these circumstances I have no hesitation whatever in moving to report Progress.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Sir Wilfrid Lawson.*)

(10.54.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I had no intention to show any want of courtesy towards the hon. Baronet in not answering his question. I have not answered it for the simple reason that if the hon. Baronet had only listened to the Debate which took place on the last occasion when the House discussed this subject, he would have known that his question had already been answered. The question of Egypt was discussed on the last occasion when the Army Estimates were taken, although it was admitted that the question was but remotely connected with the subject before the Committee but it was discussed at very great length and an interesting Debate took place. That Debate was resumed again to-day, when not a single new argument was adduced, nor, I believe, a single new fact brought forward. Three hon. Members addressed the Committee twice at inordinate length. One hon. Member spoke for 41 minutes and then again spoke for 30 minutes. I venture to think that that was a very considerable waste of the time of the House, and the Government would have been wanting in their duty to the country—their duty being to get through the business of the country in an efficient manner—if they had not endeavoured to bring the Debate to a conclusion. Therefore, the Government cannot for one moment think of consenting to the proposal to report Progress.

(10.56.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I began the Debate by moving the adjournment. I then asked a question of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. The right hon. Gentleman has said that nothing new has been adduced yet. Since I had the honour of making speech we have had an entirely n w phase of the question put before us. We have had this attack upon Tokar. On the last occasion it was only known indistinctly from the first telegram, and I confess I was so aghast that I could hardly believe it was a fact. But, unquestionably, we never have got clearly from the Government any statement as to whether it is intended to annex that country or not. The Government have simply played with the question. They said it could not be called annexation because the Egyptian Government had not abandoned the country, and because the Sultan had not given up his Sovereign rights. I have read to the House a statement made by the Minister in 1884 in which there was a distinct pledge that the Khedive was to abandon the Soudan, and that that was the policy of Her Majesty's Government. But now the old policy is entirely altered. Things have got to such a pitch, we are so down-trodden on this side of the House that we are not allowed when this enormous alteration is made in the policy of Her Majesty's Government, which we find has already cost the lives of some hundreds of persons, and which we believe will lead to an enormous expenditure of blood and treasure, and which will require us to retain an Army in Egypt for years to come—we are not allowed to discuss the matter. There has been no discussion, because it requires two to make a discussion, and right hon. Gentlemen opposite have not attempted to answer us. We have asked the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs to make a distinct statement of the policy of the Government, and it is because we do not get that statement that we are continuing the Debate. The First Lord of the Treasury by moving that the question be now put has endorsed the action of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. We are therefore justified in moving to report Progress in order that the Government may have an opportunity of reconsidering their position, and of inventing some reason for the policy which they are adopting.

(11.1.) MR. STOREY: The exact position of affairs is this. A question was asked of the Government from this side. The Gentleman whom we particularly wanted to answer it was not in his place—I refer to the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. We have now been told that the reason for not answering the question was that it had already been answered; and the head of the Government, when he told us that, complained that one Member of this House had spoken first for 40 minutes and afterwards for 30 minutes without adducing a single new fact. Thereupon all the hon. Members opposite, who had not listened to the Debate, with that astounding faith and gullibility of disposition which distinguishes the Tory Party, accepted the statement of their chief. Now, I contravene the statement that the question we have asked has been answered. The question was this: Sir Evelyn Baring, in 1884, said the Khedive accepted gratefully the policy of the abandonment of the whole of the Soudan, which he believed, on mature reflection, to be best in the interests of Egypt. If that be correct, then how do the Government reconcile it with the forward movement on Tokar? We want that answered by the Government, and if we do not get the reply to-night we shall proceed on future convenient occasions to (Parliamentarily) compel them to answer us.

(11.4.) MR. CONYBEARE: I may give another reason which justifies the action of my hon. Friend. The responsible chiefs of the Party which sit on this side of the House have in no way assisted us in our attempts to get satisfactory assurances from the Government. I have noticed a lamentable absence and ominous silence on this question on the part of those who usually occupy the Front Opposition Bench. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham is smiling in unusual fashion. He has been enjoying——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order order! That line of argument is not relevant to the Motion.

MR. CONYBEARE: I was only employing it for purposes of illustration. The right hon. Gentleman is always willing to criticise the action of his former colleagues; but I had hoped he would have helped us in getting an answer from the Government. It will, no doubt, be in his recollection——

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I have already told the hon. Member he is speaking irrelevantly. I must now warn him of the consequences which will ensue if he persists in that conduct.

MR. CONYBEARE: Certainly, Sir; I bow to your ruling. But it cannot be denied that we had no satisfactory assurance from the Government. Cannot the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs do away with the necessity for further discussion by giving us the answer we require? Our demand has been met as usual with a Closure Motion. We want the Government, however, to closure the forward movement in the Soudan. Complaint is made that we have been wasting time. I do not think that charge can fairly be made against me. I have been in Egypt and done something to make myself acquainted with the issues involved in this question, and I might justly have asked the indulgence of the House in order to raise certain points. Having regard to the immense importance of this matter from an international standpoint, I do think we have a right to an answer to the questions asked. If the Government intend to adopt this attitude they will find it difficult to make progress with their business. I hope the right hon. Gentlemen will be wise in time and tell us whether they intend to continue the policy of annexation in the Soudan.

*(11.11.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The only reason why I did not answer was that I dealt fully with every point raised when this matter was discussed a few nights ago, and I felt that to repeat what I said on that occasion would be to waste the time of the Committee. I listened to the speech of the Member for Northampton and to some others which followed and I certainly did not hear one question which has not already been amply answered. Having made the most specific declarations as to the policy of the Government, having stated that there has been no departure from the policy of 1886, that the movement on Tokar was made in connection with the defence of the Red Sea ports, and that there is no intention of advancing into the interior of the country, I felt it to be unnecessary to take up the time of the House by repeating these assurances.

*(11.14.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): Are the Government going to maintain the policy of occupying Tokar and Handoub? That is what we want to know.

(11.15.) DR. TANNER: I hope the Government will take to heart the interesting lesson they have received tonight. We have had *dilettanti* utterances from two or three right hon. Gentlemen who receive large salaries, the larger portion of the supporters of the Government have been indulging in the luxuries of Morpheus, and we have tried in vain to get a satisfactory answer to our question; I want to try and prevent the recurrence in future of the action of the First Lord of the Treasury in performing the part of the bogie man.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

(11.16.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 68; Noes 160.—(Div. List, No. 76.)

(11.25.) Original Question again proposed.

*SIR G. CAMPBELL: I now want to move a reduction of the Vote in respect of the troops employed in South Africa. I have constantly protested against the system of making the British taxpayer pay the whole of our military expenditure. These colonies are called upon to contribute only a nominal sum. Now the Government propose to give responsible Government to Natal, and I want to know if any arrangements have been made as to the cost of the military defence of Natal? The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies, with that audacity which characterises some of his statements. told us that no very serious civil or military questions were involved in this matter, but I do not agree with him. This is a matter worthy the attention of Parliament that involves the expenditure of a large sum, and I, therefore, think we are entitled to know what arrangements have been made, and if the taxpayers of this country will be relieved of the cost of the military defence of Natal. I beg to move the reduction of the vote by £80,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That '£5,552,700' be granted for the said Services."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

(11.30.) MR. E. STANHOPE: I think the hon. Gentleman might have had his desire gratified by simply asking a question. For the last two years we have had a Departmental Committee sitting. That Committee has been composed of representatives of the War Office, the Colonial Office, and the Treasury, and has already called upon certain colonies to pay increased sums towards the cost of troops who are maintained in those colonies. The question of the Cape has not been approached yet, but as to Natal our hope is that there shall be no military force permanently maintained there. We have had troublous times in Zululand, and we have not deemed it right to remove the troops.

*(11.31.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I gladly acknowledge that Her Majesty's Government are doing a good deal in regard to the question. I have often brought to the notice of the House, the necessity of the colonies making an annual contribution towards the troops employed within their borders. I am surprised to hear Her Majesty's Government

hope that troops will not be permanently employed in Natal. We have been told by the Under Secretary for the Colonies that the Government are prepared to give responsible Government to Natal, and what I want is a distinct assurance as to whether, when responsible Government is given, we shall be relieved from charge. I was a little alarmed at what the Secretary said in regard to Zululand. Natal and Zululand are mixed up with one another, and it will be a real evasion if you are going to keep troops in Zululand at the expense of the people of this country. Again, I want to know whether any precaution will be taken that Natal will, out of their own resources, keep up a sufficient force, and whether we shall, before matters are finally settled, have an opportunity of discussing them?

(11.34.) **Mr. E. STANHOPE**: An opportunity for discussion will be given in the Colonial Vote: certainly the question does not arise in the Army Estimates.

Dr. CLARK: Am I to understand that the sole garrison will be the garrison we maintain for Imperial purposes at Simon's Bay, and that the entire cost of all the men required in Natal will be defrayed by Natal?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: I have not said anything of the kind. The Departmental Committee will presently consider the case of the Cape.

***Sir G. CAMPBELL**: Will Her Majesty's Government make it a stipulation that Natal will keep up a force sufficient for the protection of Natal so that the taxpayers of this country will not be burdened with any charge?

(11.36.) **Mr. CONYBEARE**: I think the apprehensions of my hon. Friend are somewhat exaggerated. I do not imagine that when the troops are removed from Pietermaritzburg there will be any greater danger to the white population of Natal than there is at the present time. I have every reason to believe that responsible Government in Natal will be quite competent to look after itself and not involve itself in complications either with the population of Natal or the population of Zululand. And if they do, I am not aware it will be incumbent upon us to send out troops there any more than we are in the habit of sending out troops in the case of disturbance in New Zealand. I am extremely glad to hear the troops are to be withdrawn from Natal. My own belief is it will be an advantage to our people there as well as to the natives, and it certainly will remove the inducement to employ our troops whenever there is any difficulty over the border. The troublous times in Zululand, to which the right hon. gentleman referred, resulted from our own wretched mismanagement of the Zulus. If it had not been for the disgraceful way in which we treated some of the chiefs I believe we should not have had any trouble whatever. I hope that, in connection with the withdrawal of troops from Natal, England will pluck up courage, and pursue a policy more in consonance with common sense than that pursued by the Colonial Office in times past.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: I beg leave to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

(11.40.) **Sir G. CAMPBELL**: I have given notice of my intention to move another reduction, but the point I wished to raise has been to some extent answered by what the Secretary of State for War has just said. I wished to move a reduction in respect of the troops employed in colonies which at present pay no contributions whatever. There are several colonies which do not pay one farthing towards the cost of troops. I hope we are to understand that the Committee which is sitting will consider the whole subject. If I am right in that understanding, it is not necessary I should raise that particular point. I am glad to see the Secretary for War assents to that. While I am on my legs, I want to refer to the general subject of this Vote—the cost of the men and officers of the Army. The more I see and read, the more and more convinced I am that we are going too much on the old-fashioned line of sacrificing to a morbid desire to maintain a totally inefficient Army the defensive forces of the country. The real defensive forces are emasculated in order to maintain an offensive regular force which is really quite contemptible from a European point of view. The Militia is far below its strength, and there is the greatest possible difficulty in getting officers. A good deal has been done for the Volunteers, but we are told that the different corps are short of officers. I do not think you are spending enough money on the Volunteers, and I am sure you are not doing enough for the Militia. I wish to enter a protest against the way in which we expend our men and resources in India, Egypt and other parts of the world, while we neglect an auxiliary and popular force in this country.

*(11.48.) Sir J. SWINBURNE: Are the Government in a position to say when they intend to withdraw the troops from Natal?

Mr. E. STANHOPE: I am afraid I cannot answer the question of the hon. Baronet. Personally I am very anxious to withdraw the troops from Natal at as early a date as possible, consistent with the material interests of Natal. It is better the troops should be concentrated as far as possible in the Cape Colony, but looking to the present condition of Natal and the districts bordering on Natal I cannot fix a date for the withdrawal of the troops.

(11.50.) Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I desire to call the attention of the Secretary for War to a matter which may have his cognisance, but which I am sure has not his approval. Large Government works are under construction at Shoeburyness. They are under the control of the Engineer Department, and that Department have made a practice for several years of turning off old soldiers when work is scarce elsewhere, and they can get the young fellows from the brickfields in the neighbourhood. I do not say that old soldiers because they are old soldiers should have a preference, but I think that old soldiers when once they are employed on work in garrison towns should not be sent about their business at a moment's notice without any reason whatever. The Secretary of State for War has frequently expressed his interest in the employment of Reserve and discharged soldiers; he has now a practical opportunity of showing such interest and of preventing the continuance of a practice which creates much dissatisfaction amongst very respectable old soldiers who now live in and about garrison towns.

*(11.53.) The FINANCIAL SECRETARY to the WAR OFFICE (Mr. Brodrick, Surrey, Guildford): Our experience is whenever an officer has the opportunity of employing old soldiers he does so, and the men receive proper consideration. I am surprised, therefore, to hear the statement made by the hon. and gallant Member, and some inquiry shall be made into the matter.

Dr. CLARK: I notice there has been a reduction in the agency charges ——

Mr. E. STANHOPE: The hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury) is going to raise the question in the form of a question. We shall then have an opportunity of explaining what we propose to do with regard to agents.

Dr. CLARK: But we cannot discuss the matter upon a question.

*(11.55.) Mr. BRODRICK: I can explain the position in a few words. The present Army Agents have undertaken to continue to issue the pay of officers without any charge, and this will cause a large diminution in the amount voted from January next. The right of the officers to a continuance of agency has been recognised for a long period, and is based on a surrender of pay by the officers in consideration of agency being established.

(11.56.) Mr. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): I should like to know from the Government whether there is any official organisation to which employers in the country can apply when they want to obtain the services of old soldiers. The only organisation of which I have any knowledge is, I understand, an entirely voluntary one. It has an office in London, but it is not sufficiently known. There are, I believe, a very large number of employers who would be very glad to have old soldiers of good character in their service. I have some in my service, and I find them exceedingly steady and intelligent.

*Mr. BRODRICK: This subject has been several times previously brought before the House, and the Secretary of State for War will undertake that the reference to the Committee that is about to sit on the Recruiting Question will be drawn in such a way as to enable them to take the matter into consideration. That will certainly be the most efficient way of dealing with it.

MR. BRUNNER: My desire was that the Government should adopt some means of making the organisation in Pall Mall better known, and I trust that the point will receive attention.

(11.58.) DR. TANNER: I think that insufficient attention has been paid to the point raised by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy. The hon. Member drew attention to the fact that while certain colonies pay towards the cost of troops employed within their borders, there are several colonies who contribute nothing to such cost. If we are to be fair all round, the Government ought certainly to take into consideration the fact that there are colonies who do not pay anything towards the troops. We ought to have some distinct assurance from the Government that no invidious distinction will be made between——

It being midnight, the Chairman proceeded to interrupt the business.

Whereupon Mr. WILLIAM HENRY SMITH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

(12.0.) The Committee divided—Ayes 157; Noes 49.—(Div. List. No. 77.)

Original Question again proposed.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): May I call the attention to the fact that the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy made a Motion proposing to reduce the Vote by £50,000, and it was to that Motion I was speaking at 12 o'clock?

THE CHAIRMAN: That Amendment was withdrawn.

DR. TANNER: But may I ask whether the Question was withdrawn by the Chair?

THE CHAIRMAN: Yes, it was.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolution to be reported to-morrow.

Committee to sit again to-morrow.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) ACT (1890) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 148.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for this day.

ELECTORS REGISTRATION (ACCELERATION) (RE-COMMITTED) BILL.—(No. 147.)

COMMITTEE.

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Dr. Tanner.*)

*(12.20.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): This Bill has now been amended *pro formâ* in Committee by the insertion of the Government Amendments.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co. Mid): I object.

*MR. RITCHIE: But the hon. Member cannot object to my making a statement? I desire to say that the Government do not think they would be justified in keeping this Bill on the Paper and allowing the matter to remain in a state of uncertainty. It is undesirable that those who are engaged in the duties of registration should have any doubt as to those duties and the time in which they must perform them. We had hoped that this Bill would have been accepted generally by the House when we introduced it at the desire of County Councils, but I have been in communication with hon. Gentlemen opposite who have Amendments on the Paper, and from who I am told I fear there is very little probability of their withdrawing their opposition and Amendments. I propose to put the Bill down for Monday, in the hope that hon. Gentlemen who have notices of Amendments to entirely alter the character of the Bill, will meanwhile reconsider the position. But I think it my duty to put an end to uncertainty, and if on Monday hon. Members cannot see their way to withdraw the Amendments to which I refer, and if they are not prepared to accept the Bill practically in the form in which it is now reprinted, it will be my duty to move the discharge of the order.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): Does the right hon. Gentleman, in putting the Bill down for Monday, intend that it shall be taken at an hour when it can be discussed?

*MR. RITCHIE: We propose to take it after the principal business of the Government for the day is concluded.

(12.21.) MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I think the right hon. Gentleman has said quite enough to justify opposition to the Bill by hon. Members on this side. The right hon. Gentleman brings down a Bill to effect important changes in the constitution of the country, and simply throws it at our heads saying "If you do not choose to accept the whole Bill as we present it we shall withdraw it, and you shall not have whatever benefit it may contain." The Bill has passed through Committee simply *pro formâ* without a word of discussion, and if the right hon. Gentleman thinks we are going to let an important Bill like this pass without consideration and, if need be, amendment—if that is his attitude, I can assure him that although I have had representations made to me in favour of the Bill by the Clerk to the County Council of my county yet I shall offer the most strenuous opposition to the Bill, because I protest against the infringement of the right this House has to discuss and amend any Bill that comes before it. If the right hon. Gentleman does not choose to listen to criticisms upon the measure he had better withdraw it at once.

*MR. RITCHIE: I wish it to be understood that what I said has reference to Amendments on the Paper which are of a fundamental character; embracing, as they do, alterations in the franchise, they are not simply Amendments dealing with the machinery of registration with which we ask the House to deal. To Amendments of that character of course my remarks do not apply. The Amendments I refer to are those which strike at the very root of the Bill which we have introduced at the earnest request of County Councils. It is a pure machinery Bill and we are not prepared to ask the House to embark on the discussion of franchise questions.

(12.22.) MR. STOREY (Sunderland): In my judgment some of the Amendments which appear upon the Paper are by no means germane to the Bill as promoted, but I want to represent to the right hon. Gentleman that at any rate in my part of the country there are very serious objections to the changes he proposes being made at the present time, practical objections. Such changes, if made at all, and I admit they ought to be made, are surely changes which ought to be made in quiet times, and not under the shadow of a General Election. With his practical knowledge the right hon. Gentleman knows that the gentlemen charged with the duty of registration in country places are not so clever as they might be, and if a General Election should take place immediately after the passing of this Bill into law, these changes in forms will perplex and bother them. At the present time there is great difficulty in getting Overseers and Assistant Overseers to provide full and accurate lists each year, and if you make the changes under pressure of time it will be impossible in many places at once to get out sufficient and accurate lists. While I entirely agree with the changes proposed, I think the right hon. Gentleman would exercise a wise discretion in not pushing them forward now.

*(12.24.) MR. RITCHIE: I want the Committee to understand that the Government must not be supposed to be acting with the slightest disrespect towards Members of the House if they do not proceed with the Bill. I on a previous occasion explained our deeply-rooted objections to changing the whole character of the Bill in the manner I have indicated. The position we take is this: If this change is to be made it must be made in sufficient time in order to allow anyone who has anything to do with the working of the Registration Law to make himself acquainted with the change. The Government do not think they would be justified in pushing forward the Bill if it could only come into operation at a time when possibly those charged with the administration would not be fully acquainted with the change. If the Bill does not pass we shall do all we can without it to assist those who are charged with the duty of making up the register, in the performance of their duties within the time and in the best manner possible.

(12.25.) MR. CAUSTON: I am in favour of a Registration Acceleration Bill, but with freedom to propose Amendments. But if we only enter upon the Bill after 12 o'clock there is no opportunity of dealing with Amendments, and therefore, I would suggest that the Bill should be taken at a time to allow fair discussion of reasonable Amendments.

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [2nd March] reported.

NAVY ESTIMATES.

1. "That 71,000 men and boys be employed for the Sea and Coast Guard Services for the year ending on the 31st day of March 1892, including 14,005 Royal Marines."

2. "That a sum, not exceeding £3,404,000, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Expense of Wages, &c. to Officers, Seamen and Boys, Coast Guard, and Royal Marines, which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1892."

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, That the Resolution which, upon the 24th day of February, was reported from the Committee of Supply, and which was then agreed to by the House, be now read;

"That a number of Land Forces, not exceeding 153,696, all ranks, be maintained for the Service of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland at Home and Abroad, excluding Her Majesty's Indian Possessions, during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Ordered, That leave be given to bring in a Bill to provide, during Twelve Months, for the Discipline and Regulation of the Army; and that Mr. Secretary Stanhope, Lord George Hamilton, the Judge Advocate General, and Mr. Brodrick do prepare and bring it in.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 240.]

MUSEUMS AND GYMNASIUMS BILL.
(No. 159.)

Order for consideration, and Bill, as amended, read.

MR. STOREY: I object.

MR. CHANNING: I hope the hon. Member will not persist in his objection. The Bill is a very useful one.

MR. STOREY: I object to its being taken at such an hour as this—half-past 12.

*MR. F. S. POWELL (Wigan): There is no opposition to the Bill from any quarter of the House, and I hope the hon. Member will allow this stage to be taken.

*MR. RITCHIE: I would point out to the hon. Member that the Bill is not compulsory.

MR. STOREY: I see it is a useful measure; therefore, I will waive my objection.

Bill, as amended, considered.

Amendments made.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."—*(Mr. F. S. Powell.)*

MR. CONYBEARE: The question has been raised in regard to Government and other Bills, whether the Third Reading can be taken after a Bill has been amended. I remember last Session we had an all-night Sitting——

Bill to be read the third time to-morrow.

CONVEYANCING AND LAW OF PROPERTY ACT (1881) AMENDMENT BILL.
(No. 5.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday next.

BRITISH SHIPS IN FOREIGN TRADES.

Return ordered—

"Showing the number and tonnage of British Vessels employed in the Foreign-going trade during each of the years 1884-5 to 1888-9, inclusive, together with the number of men employed, and the number of men lost by wreck and other accidents in such vessels, distinct from the number and tonnage of vessels, and the number of men employed in the Home Trade, and the number of lives lost in the Home Trade and in fishing vessels."—*(Mr. Whitley.)*

TEACHERS (REGISTRATION AND ORGANISATION) BILL.—(No. 156.)

Ordered, That the Select Committee on Teachers (Registration and Organisation) Bill do consist of Sixteen Members.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of —Mr Arthur Acland, Mr. Charles Acland, Mr. Bruce, Mr. Sydney Buxton, Mr. Conway, Sir William Hart Dyke, Mr. Hobhouse, Mr. John Kelly, Mr. Lawrence, Viscount Lymington, Mr. Powell, Mr. Roby, Sir Henry Roscoe, Mr. Rowntree, Mr. Sidebotham, and Sir Richard Temple.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—*(Sir Richard Temple.)*

House adjourned at twenty minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 6th March, 1891.

THE SCOTCH RAILWAY STRIKE.

*Earl WEMYSS, in rising

"To call attention to the strike of railway servants in Scotland, and to the system of picketing, and the outrages by which it was accompanied; and to ask Her Majesty's Government whether they would take such measures as would in all future strikes ensure due protection to Unionists willing to work and to non-Union workmen,"

said: My Lords, although I imagine that few of your Lordships will assent to the dictum of Sir William Harcourt "that we are all Socialists now," I apprehend we must all agree that home politics in the main turn upon social questions in which the working man is the prominent figure. I mean the working man as generally understood, though I think there are many of your Lordships who may lay claim to the denomination, who work overtime, and are as hard worked as any of Her Majesty's subjects. This question which I venture to bring before your Lordships is one, I think, of great national importance. It is easy to understand why social questions occupy the strong position they do. The other day a Member of the other House, whom I have not seen for some years, met me in the street, and we got discussing this subject. My friend said, "The fact is, the working man now takes a greater interest in politics than he did." My answer was, "Pardon me. I think it is the politician who takes a greater interest in the workman since he has had a vote." This is nowhere more strikingly exemplified than in the railway strike, to which I am calling attention, for politicians of every kind—Home Rulers, Disestablishers, politicians lay and clerical—have rushed wildly into the fray and expressed their sympathy in words and something more substantial with those who were on strike. Let me show the sort of language which has been used with reference to the strike by politicians. Let me take a distinguished friend of mine, an ex-Minister and an ex-Governor-General of India (the Marquess of Ripon). He writes to the Glasgow Committee sending a subscription of £25, and he says that the position taken up by the Directors—mark the word "position," it is not what the Railway Directors have done as regards overtime, or long hours, or anything of that kind, but that the position taken up by the Directors of the North British Railway, and of the other railway lines in Scotland with reference to this strike—is unjustifiable and universally condemned. I think my noble Friend ought to be very much obliged to me for giving him an opportunity of explaining publicly to the House in what respect the position taken up by those Directors was unjustifiable. As to the statement that the action and position of the Directors was unjustifiable, I leave him to settle that with the Chairman of the North British Railway (the Marquess of Tweeddale), whose action is impugned. Then you have Members of Parliament. Take one of them, Mr. Cunninghame Graham. This is the language he held to these poor men on strike, who were suffering many privations. Mr. Graham pointed to the Clerkenwell explosion, and the legislation which followed the agitation among the Highland crofters, and then he said—"I do not wish such things to happen in connection with the railway strike as occurred at Clerkenwell and in the West Highlands." What is this but the old philanthropic advice—"Mind you do not nail his ears to the pump." Then you have Mr. Munro Ferguson, who warns the railway servants to be slow in entering into a fight, but, having entered, to fight it out—mark the words—"with whatever weapons come to hand." Was it surprising the men should have been stimulated to action by such advice? I shall presently have to call attention to the outrages which have taken place, and though, of course, we cannot actually trace them to those words, it is not unnatural that the men should have been urged on by such language as that. One of the great points in the Scottish strike was the breach of contract. And yet you have one of the many clerics who rushed into the fray justifying the breach of contract by saying that "Matthew, when keeping his accounts and making up his books on the Sea of Galilee, when called on broke his contract." That is the sort of rubbish that has been talked during the course of this strike. Now, let us see what was the nature of the strike. I certainly have hearty sympathy with the men who thought that they were over-worked and had to work those long hours. No doubt the safety of the travelling public is more or less dependent upon the hours which these men work, and doubtless much of the sympathy of the public was due to the question of their own safety. The railway servants complained of their long hours. They wanted a ten-hours day, with overtime. The Executive of the Union did not wish the men to strike until they had all sent in their notices, as they were serving under contracts from one week to a month; but the men took the bit in their mouths, and struck on the 24th December, at a time of the year when a railway strike would cause the greatest inconvenience and would be felt in every home. It was hoped by their striking without notice, and without completing their contracts, that the whole public would be brought to their knees, and that trade, industry, and commerce—everything—would be paralysed. The result of the strike was the loss of something like £1,000,000 sterling to Scotland in trade, manufacture, and commerce, and the railway it is said lost £200,000 or £300,000. So much for the action of the railway servants. What was the position taken up by the Directors—the position which my noble Friend the Marquess of Ripon considers to be unjustifiable? They were ready throughout to meet and to discuss the grievances of the men, and mind I do not speak as a Railway Director, I speak as one of the public. They were ready from first to last to meet the men and discuss the grievances of which they complained, and they had, in fact, settled grievances in some of the branches of railway work; but on principle they objected to professional outsiders taking par in the discussion, as my noble Friend himself I am sure would do in the case of any dispute with his own gamekeepers or workmen. And they insisted on the men who had broken their contracts returning to work. But the men refused to meet the Directors on this footing until the 29th January, when they accepted the terms offered them by the Railway Directors, that is to say, they were prepared to discuss the matter on the terms which had been refused at the commencement of the strike. So far the strike has happily ended. But I want to call your Lordships' attention to what were the accompaniments of the strike. There were outrages, picketing, and what I may call a state of siege on the part of the railway servants. On the North British Railway there were 16 cases of intimidation, 25 cases of outrages on the person, 12 cases of outrages on property, and 16 cases of outrages on public safety. I have them all here, but I do not desire needlessly to trouble your Lordships with all the details. Here are some of the cases of outrage. William Oliver, engine-driver; James Lightbody, fireman; Robert Allison, conductor of North British passenger train from Hawick, molested on arrival at Newcastle by servants of the North Eastern Company, who shouted and threw coal and slag at them, and otherwise annoyed them. On January 11 Robert Anderson, signalman, and John Denholm, pilot guard, both loyal servants at Sighthill, attacked by Thomas M'Killop, Caledonian engine-driver on strike, who was apprehended. On January 15th Alexander Bowman, loyal engine-driver, knocked down and severely injured when crossing the Links at Burntisland on his way from work to his house by William Millar, coal trimmer at Burntisland Dock, and two men unknown. On the same date, January 15th, David Marshall, loyal engine-driver, molested by a crowd of men, women, and children when on his way to St. Margaret's Locomotive Works, Edinburgh; they followed him from his house to the works gates, hooting, pushing, and jostling him, and were accompanied by a piper. On January 17th, other cases occurred. George Mitchell, loyal engine-driver, struck by stone and collar-bone broken. This was a remarkable case, because notwithstanding this man had his collar-bone broken, when passing Cadder Bridge, near Bishopbriggs, with an express passenger train at 50 miles an hour, he brought it safe into the station. But I might go on multiplying examples. Of outrages on property there were 12. I need not trouble your Lordships with them, but they were all in the same direction. Sixteen of the cases I have got on the North British Railway were outrages on the public safety. This is the sort of thing that was done. I mention these cases because they affect the whole travelling public, not merely the servants of the Railway Companies. On December 31st pieces of slag were placed between the switches and points at one of the junctions—culprit not discovered. On January 21st two spraggs were placed on the line; January 22nd points tampered with, engine turned on to other line and collided with another—culprit not discovered; on another occasion a railway chair was placed on the line and caused obstruction—culprit not discovered; again on January 16th a large rock which required several men to move was placed on the Highland line. Thus your Lordships see the safety of the travelling public was endangered in every direction, and there was besides what I have mentioned a good deal of stone-throwing. As regards the question of picketing, there were 32 cases of picketing, and it was only by the system of picketing that the strike was maintained. Here is a case of a man who states that the picket entered his signal box and so threatened him, he being the signalman, that he had, for fear of personal violence, to leave his post. In another case a door was forced and three panes of glass were broken by a band of pickets. On January 4th a loyal signalman was molested at his house. At the principal locomotive depôts, and other centres, large picketing parties assembled both by day and night, and did their best to intercept and prevent men getting to their work and to persuade others at work to leave. No violence was openly used, although there were many instances of loyal men being attacked outside and annoyed at their homes. The wives and children of the men on strike also caused great annoyance by hooting and jeering and stone throwing. That was the state of things which existed during this strike. Now, what is the state of the law with reference to Trades Unions and combinations of workmen? Before the Royal Commission which was appointed to consider these questions in 1868 there had been more than 30 and 40 Acts passed at different times. That Commission, in considering this question, sat for two years, and they came to the conclusion that it was desirable that the laws with regard to combinations in restraint of trade should be altered and repealed. The result was an alteration of the law. At the same time the Commission, while recommending that the combination of workmen should no longer be considered to be in restraint of trade, expressed itself in the strongest possible way against the abuses of picketing and interference with the workman who declined to join these combinations. The whole law on this question of the right of picketing, and the right of a man to the free exercise of his liberty, was laid down by my noble and learned Friend Lord Bramwell before that Commission sat in the famous cases arising out of the Tailor's Strike in London. The charge of the noble and learned Lord to the jury, and the sentence, are appended to the Report of the Commission in a footnote. That Commission sat in 1868 and 1869. This is what the noble and learned Lord says in his charge, and I think these are words which ought to guide us in all our dealings with this most vital question. He says—

> "The liberty of a man's mind and will to say how he should bestow himself and his means, his talents and his industry, was as much a subject of the law's protection as was that of his body. Generally speaking, the way in which people had endeavoured to control the operation of the minds of men was by putting restraints on their bodies, and therefore we had not so many instances in which the liberty of the mind was vindicated as was that of the body. Still, if any set of men agreed among themselves to coerce that liberty of mind and thought by compulsion and restraint, they would be guilty of a criminal offence, namely, that of conspiring against the liberty of mind and freedom of will of those towards whom they so conducted themselves."

Then he goes on to say what the state of the law was, and he ends with reference to picketing that he was of opinion that—

> "If picketing should be done in a way which excited no reasonable alarm, or did not coerce or annoy those who were the subjects of it, it would be no offence in law. It was perfectly lawful to endeavour to persuade persons who had not hitherto acted with them to do so, provided that persuasion did not take the shape of compulsion or coercion."

Now, the action of the pickets which I have referred to was more or less coercive; there were outrages upon property, there were outrages upon the person, and there was intimidation. It appears to me that a state of things of that kind should not be allowed to continue. If the law is sufficient, let the law be administered uniformly and firmly. The Royal Commission which sat in 1868 and 1869 accompanied their recommendations, as I have said, with the strongest possible expression of opinion that the abuses of picketing should be uniformly and carefully repressed. My belief is that you cannot have picketing without abuses such as those to which I have referred. You talk about moral suasion; but the fact of the matter is that picketing represents the power of the Union that is at its back—the coercive will of those men by whom it is directed. What I think is: that if the law is sufficient, it ought to be enforced. If it is not, in that case it ought to be strengthened. All the more should it be strengthened in the cause of liberty, because you have to deal now, in the case of the Unions, with a new spirit which has risen up—the spirit of what is called the New Unionism. With the old Unionism of the time of the Commission a strike was a last resort. They endeavoured to get what they wanted in the interests of the workmen without having recourse to a strike, which, in nine cases out of 10, is accompanied with great misery, great loss, and very bad feeling. They were anxious to get what benefits they could for the working men without having recourse to this *ultima ratio.* Mr. Macdonald, who subsequently became Member for Stafford, and of whom I used to see a great deal at that time—I am talking of 22 or 23 years ago—explained how Trade Unions, which were, besides, benefit societies, were for the general good and improvement of the working classes; and how it was through their influence that we have the Factory Acts and the Masters and Servants Act. He also referred to many other Acts passed for the benefit of workmen by Parliaments, which at that time were supposed to be capitalist Parliaments, and we had evidence given by Mr. Macdonald to the effect that the Parliament of the day, both Commons and Lords, was ever ready to lend a willing ear to any complaint on the part of the workmen, and to remedy any evil which they suffered from, which appeared to be a genuine evil, and required a remedy. That was the character of the old Unions. But the new Unions are of a totally different character. So far from discouraging strife, the new Unionism fosters strife; the new Unionism is more of a political organisation than an organisation like the old Unions for the improvement of the condition of the working man. The new Unions foster strikes. They are, as it were, a Labour Land League, or rather I may put it better by saying they are a Labour League on the principle of the Land League. As the Land League was instituted to make war on the landlords, so this new Unionism under its leaders endeavours to make war on capitalists, the object being to get all the instruments of production into the hands of a labour-governed State. Therefore, I hope no approval will be given to anything like this new Unionism, and that the Government will resist it, for I believe that liberty in this country is as dear to the working man as to any other member of the community. I do not know what the proportion now of men not in the Union is to men in the Union, but I know at the time to which I refer—I am talking of 22 years ago, when the Royal Commission upon the question sat—it was 17 men out of the Union to one man in the Union. But I hold this is not a question of numbers. It is a question of principle—and if there is one man who objects to join the union the whole power of the State and of the Empire ought to be brought to bear for the protection of that man regardless of what the majority may be on the other side. If that man is not free, as my noble and learned Friend (Lord Bramwell) said, to dispose of his labour and whatever he has wherewith to gain his livelihood to the best of his knowledge and ability, supposing he does no harm to anybody else in so doing, he is entitled to the protection of the State, even though he may be alone. And unless this be so, we are no longer a free people. This question is at present, as we know, a very grave one. I am inclined to think that the present law, if properly administered, is sufficient, and I am strengthened in that view by a pamphlet which has been written by the Professor of Political Economy at Glasgow (Mr. Mavor) on the Scottish strike. He thus describes the present law—

"7. Penalty for intimidation or annoyanc, by violence or otherwise: Every person who, with a view to compel any other person to abstain from doing or to do any act which such other person has a legal right to do or abstain from doing, wrongfully and without legal authority—(1) Uses violence to or intimidates such other person or his wife or children or injures his property; or (2), persistently follows such other person about from place to place; or (3), hides any tools, clothes, or other property owned or used by such other person, or deprives him of or hinders him in the use thereof; or (4), watches or besets the house or other place where such other person resides, or works, or carries on business, or happens to be, or the approach to such house or place; or (5), follows such other person with two or more other persons in a disorderly manner in or through any street or road; shall on conviction thereof by a Court of Summary Jurisdiction (in Scotland the Sheriff of the county or any one of his substitutes), or on indictment as hereinafter mentioned, be liable to pay a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds, or to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding three months, with or without hard labour. Attending at or near the house or place where a person resides, or works, or carries on business, or happens to be, or the approach to such house or place, in order merely to obtain or communicate information, shall not be deemed a watching or besetting within the meaning of this section."

In the recent strike there can be no doubt whatever that the law was contravened by the picketing which occurred. A state of siege was established. The loyal servants of the North British Railway Company had to be housed and fed within the property of the Company. At Cowlairs there were 180 beds and food was supplied to 270 men; at the Haymarket, in Edinburgh, there were 20 beds, and food was supplied to 90 men; at Kipps there were 24 housed and 48 boarded; at St. Margaret's 140 men were housed, and 230 boarded; at Dundee there were 80 men housed aud 54 boarded. In speaking of Dundee, I should explain that in the early part of the strike nearly one-half of the railway *employés* would have been willing to accept the terms of the company had they been permitted to do so, but they were not allowed to come in. Lodgings were also provided outside the company's premises for a number of men at Kelso, Hawick, and other places. At Cowlairs the company employed cooks and provided provisions. I believe the purveying was generally done by hotel-keepers and restaurateurs. It was simply a state of siege. All those servants were simply sticking to their duty and endeavouring to fulfil their contracts. They were free men, and were entitled to protection. The other servants who had broken their contracts swarmed outside the railway property, insulting and injuring the loyal men. Such a state of things is disgraceful, and it never was intended by the Legislature that it should exist; and if the law is not sufficient it ought, as I have said, to be amended and strengthened. I have spoken about the old Unionism and about the new Unionism, and I have endeavoured to put before your Lordships very cursorily the state of things which now exists; and if your Lordships would allow me to say a few words more I should wish now to explain my position, for I am anxious that my motives should not be misinterpreted or impugned. I should be sorry if it went out that in taking up the cause of free labour against this tyrannical exercise of power I am hostile to Unionism. Far from it. I should be sorry if it were thought that I am in any way unfriendly to the person who is commonly called the working man. I think I have already given substantial proof to the contrary. I was intimately associated with Mr. Macdonald in making that alteration in the law of 1857 which put master and servant upon a fair footing, and I have served on the Trade Union Commission for two years. Previously to the passing of that Act masters could only be dealt with in disputes with workmen for breach of contract civilly, while the workmen were liable to be taken into custody on a criminal charge, handcuffed and sent to prison. As I have said, I got the Bill through the House of Commons, which put the master and servant on a fair and equal footing. Both are now treated on an equality, and the question of imprisonment can only arise where fines are not paid, as would happen in any other case. Upon the Trades Union Commission I was most heartily in favour of doing away with the prohibition against combinations of the men as being in restraint of trade. All along, however, I have felt that anything which interfered with a man's freedom or will and action to bestow his labour as he chose, ought to be, as the Royal Commission recommended, uniformly and carefully suppressed. We have now a new Royal Commission in prospect. We do not yet know the terms of the reference; but I hope whatever they may be that the Commission will find what is so much wanted—namely, a *modus vivendi* between capital and labour. I doubt very much whether this Commission will be able to collect any information or come to any conclusion very different from the Commission of 1868 and 1869. That Commission had its origin in the Sheffield and Manchester outrages. It recommended the relaxation of the law coupled with the suppression of the abuses of picketing, and it went into the different suggestions which were in vogue at that time for establishing a *modus vivendi* between labour and capital. It went into the questions of profit-sharing, arbitration, *conseils de prudence* as in France, and conciliation. The conclusion to which the Commission came was that not in co-operation or arbitration or in the French system was the remedy to be found, but in conciliation. The last paragraph of the Report, and I am thankful to say that I was the means of introducing that last paragraph into the Report, ran thus: I will venture to read it to your Lordships because what I believed was true then I believe to be true now, and I shall be disappointed if we do not find that this Commission when it concludes its labours comes very much to the same conclusion and endorses the views of its predecessor of 23 years ago. This is the conclusion of Sir William Earl's Report:

> "The establishment of Boards of Conciliation such as those brought before us in evidence by Mr. Mundella and Mr. Hollins seems to offer a remedy at once speedy, safe, and simple. These Boards require no complicated machinery, no novel division of profits, no new mode of conducting business; they need no Act of Parliament, no legal powers or penalties. All that is needed is that certain representative employers and workmen should meet at regular stated times for 'table talk' and amicable discussion around the table of the common interests of their common trade or business. There is not a trade or business in the United Kingdom in which this system might not at once be adopted, and we see no reason why in every case results should not follow from the establishment of Boards of Conciliation as satisfactory as those at Nottingham and in the potteries, to which we have before referred. If this Commission were to have no other result than to be the means of drawing attention to this simple, speedy, practical way, not so much of settling as of anticipating and preventing disputes between masters and workmen, and of establishing lasting friendly relations between capital and labour, we believe our time will not have been misspent, and that good will come of our inquiry."

That, I believe, was founded upon this fact, that a Committee was brought together in Edinburgh in 1867 of eight representatives of the coal industry, owners, lessees, and here are the Resolutions that they passed—

> "(1) That a Board be formed to promote friendly intercommunication in the iron and coal trades; (2) that the object of said Board shall be to consider and determine the rate of wages and all questions affecting the iron and coal trade between employers and employed, and to secure a salutary means of preventing disputes; (3) the Board shall consist of employers and employed, to be elected by district meeting, and shall deal with matters between employers and employed, and by conciliation put an end to disputes."

Perhaps I may be allowed to say that I think the word "employed," which is used there, is a much better word than "*employé*," which has got into use. I forget the circumstances now, I do not remember at this moment why nothing came of that, but I imagine it was in a great measure owing to the fact that some of the large coal owners did not at the time come into it. It is a long time—24 years ago. But, as in 1867, I venture to think that a Conciliation Board, meeting round the table in the way suggested, is the real solution of the labour problem, and I hope my noble Friend (the Marquess of Tweeddale) will say something on this subject before the close of the Debate. I believe he has since the strike met the employed of the North British Railway Company round a table, and I hope they will be able to come to a satisfactory solution of the question which led to the strike. I do not know what the objects and duties of this new Royal Commission will be, but I hope and trust they will consider amongst other things the state of the law as it at present exists, whether it is sufficient or insufficient for the protection of those who decline to join Unions and who are willing to work when there is a strike, or of Unionists who do not desire to come out on strike. I hope the Royal Commission will inquire into this subject. At any rate, as regards myself, it will be a satisfaction though what remains to me of life to feel upon this vital question of capital and labour that I have, by the favour of your Lordships' kindness, availed myself of an opportunity of putting in, not as against Trades Unions, but in the interests of all labour, a plea for liberty.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN: My Lords, to the abstract proposition in the elaboration of which my noble Friend has taken up some little time, namely, that every man should have the right to make the best bargain he can for his labour which is his own property, and should be protected in the enjoyment of that property as he is protected in the enjoyment of all other legal rights, I do not suppose any of your Lordships will have any objection to make. That, I think, is a proposition which nobody will traverse. But the noble Lord goes a great deal further than that, and by his question assumes that the proper protection has not been given to those whom he terms the "loyal" workmen employed upon these Scotch railways. I submit that my noble Friend has not substantiated that proposition. He read out a certain list of cases of what he called "outrages" which have been committed, but although I listened very attentively to what my noble Friend said I could not discover that in any of the cases he showed any proof whatever that those outrages were caused by the men on strike.

Earl WEMYSS: Oh, yes; I mentioned several specially which had been committed by men on strike.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN: My memory no doubt is deceptive, but I do not remember them.

Earl WEMYSS: I will give you the list.

The Earl of DUNRAVEN: In my opinion, the worst case which my noble Friend mentioned was that of the engine-driver who was accompanied home by a crowd, who shouted at him, and were preceded by a man playing on the bagpipes. If that engine-driver had been a free-labourer imported from England I could imagine that the procession headed by a bag-piper might have had an intimidating effect upon him; but if he was an engine-driver who had been previously in the employment of one of these Scotch railways and was a native "to the manner born," I scarcely think an incident of that kind deserves to be placed in the category of intimidation and outrage. The noble Lord also refrained from giving your Lordships any information as to how many of these cases had been brought before a Court of Law, and how many convictions had been obtained, or in how many cases the defendants had been discharged. I venture to think that if statistics were forthcoming upon those points your Lordships would find that the number of cases in which it was claimed that persons had been injured or intimidated, which were brought before the Courts of Law were very few, and that in a large proportion of those cases the defendants were discharged. But I do not wish to go at any great length into that point, and I would only say that I, for one, strongly object upon such evidence as has been produced before your Lordships' House to asking Her Majesty's Government to do what my noble Friend suggests; that is to say, to take such measures as will in all future strikes ensure due protection to workmen. That is tantamount to saying that in the present strike Her Majesty's Government have been remiss and that due protection was not accorded to those persons. Does my noble Friend mean to say there was not sufficient police protection? If so, did the proper parties apply that the soldiers should be called out—that the military forces of the Crown should intervene in the disputes? If not, I fail to see what reasonable ground of complaint there is. As a matter of fact, having read the newspapers very closely during the whole period of these strikes, although I have no facts or figures or statistics to lay before your Lordships' House, my belief is that the force of police was certainly, in the great majority of cases, amply sufficient to afford protection. Undoubtedly there was a certain amount of intimidation in certain cases. I remember cases where the wives of the men who were unemployed threw stones, and there can be no doubt that in some cases intimidation was used. But in view of the enormous magnitude of the considerations, in view of the large number of men on strike, I submit that the amount of intimidation practised was very small, and I further say that the police protection was, as a general rule, sufficient. As far as can be judged from the speech of my noble Friend, there is no reason for assuming that ample protection was not given in those cases, and, therefore, there is no ground for the question which my noble Friend asks Her Majesty's Government. Now, I would like to make a few remarks upon two points which were raised by my noble Friend. He has stated that the Railway Directors were in all cases ready to hear complaints. The complaints of these men were, if I remember rightly, of three kinds, and mainly complaints as to long hours. I do not think my noble Friend or any Member of this House will deny that, as far as we can tell from the evidence which was made public, the hours worked on some of these railways were inordinately long; and the fact that a Commission has been granted by Government in the other House to inquire into that question may be taken as substantiating the fact. Another ground of complaint was that grievances would only be heard on the part of individual persons employed through the head of the particular grade or department to which he belonged. Your Lordships must understand that, rightly or wrongly, working men seriously believe that they endanger their future prospects by making complaints. They consider that in being compelled to make their complaints, not to the Directors or even to the General Manager, which they cannot do, but to the subordinate officials, they become marked men; that they are marked out for future vengeance, and that they are likely to lose their employment and means of livelihood. What the men desired was that they might be heard through persons who were not directly interested or in the employment of the companies—I might almost say that they might be heard by counsel; and, considering all the circumstances of the case, I confess that appears to me to be not an unreasonable proposition. These complaints were formulated over and over again for, I think, a period of two or three years, but no action was taken in the matter and no relief was afforded. Then my noble Friend commented very severely upon what he calls New Unionism. I do not pretend to know what is the exact difference between New Unionism and Old Unionism, but my noble Friend said the object of the New Unionism is this: that they are political organisations, and their object is to foment strikes. Now, I think that is a hard thing to say. I am not here to defend Unionism of any kind——

EARL WEMYSS: I said on the part of leaders.

THE EARL OF DUNRAVEN: But in view of the facts that the strikes to which my noble Friend alluded were rushed by the men, and were entered upon in direct opposition to the advice of the leaders, I think it is rather hard to say that the object of the leaders is to foment strikes. My noble Friend is, I think, perfectly aware that the executive of the Working Men's Association were strongly opposed to the men leaving their work except at the expiration of their notices, and that the strike was, as I say, rushed, and undertaken contrary to the advice and wishes of the executive. It appears to me to be a little hard, under those circumstances, to brand those men with a desire to create and foment strikes. I entirely agree with everything my noble Friend has said as to the hopes we may all entertain in the future that some means may be devised for settling these most serious trade disputes without friction. The amount of money involved in these contests is gigantic; and, what is much more serious than the mere money value, all the industries of the country were for a time paralysed. The strike did not merely affect the railways; it affected the comfort of everybody. It affected mining operations, shipbuilding, ironworks—it affected, in fact, the whole industries of Scotland; and I think that it is little less than a scandal that at the close of the 19th century we have been unable, with all our ingenuity, to devise any means by which differences of opinion of this kind between man and man can be decided except by the rude arbitrament of force. In all that I entirely agree with my noble Friend, and I agree with him in hoping that the time may not be far distant when some means of settlement may be devised. But I do not agree with my noble Friend in what he has said as to the lack of adequate protection in these strikes; and although I am entirely of opinion, as is he, that all due protection ought to be given to every man in the legal exercise of all his rights and privileges, I should be sorry to ask Her Majesty's Government the question which my noble Friend has asked them, as it appears to me that in doing so I should be expressing my opinion that Her Majesty's Government have been remiss in this matter, and that proper protection was not afforded to the people who were not on strike.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, I do not rise for the purpose of prolonging this discussion for any length of time, because I have no doubt that while Her Majesty's Government will in all probability say that they desire the existing law to be firmly and duly enforced, I do not anticipate that they will be in the least likely to say they propose to introduce fresh legislation on this subject, or to abandon the policy which was adopted in 1868, for which the noble Viscount the Secretary of State for India received such well deserved credit. But as the noble Lord on the Cross Benches has thrown his fly over me, I think it would be scarcely as respectful in me as I desire to be to him if I were to remain silent and not to answer the question he has addressed to me. Before I do so, I desire to say that it seems to me very unjust that my noble Friend should have attempted to throw upon the whole of the men who went out on strike in Scotland upon the occasion referred to the blame for the more serious part of the outrages which he has mentioned. I do not at all believe that those men did give, or would give, any real encouragement to the serious part of the outrages which my noble Friend has described. I do regret exceedingly one portion of his remarks, in which he seemed to bring some charge against Mr. Munro Ferguson, as if he had used words lending encouragement to the violations of the law, which my noble Friend referred to. My noble Friend knows, I am sure, that nothing could have been further from the intention of that gentleman than anything of the kind. With regard to the question which my noble Friend has addressed to me, what I have to say is this: I quite admit that I feel a deep and earnest sympathy with the desire of the railway *employés* for shorter hours; so does my noble Friend on the Cross Benches himself, as he has said; and so does the whole of the House of Commons, for they have recently passed a Resolution on the subject and appointed a Committee to see how those hours can be shortened. Under those circumstances, it was natural I should take an interest in the strike which was going on in Scotland; but my noble Friend objects to my having said that I thought the position taken up by the Directors of the railways was unjustifiable, and I will explain at once in what respect I thought, and still think, that that position was unjustifiable. Railway Companies seem to me to stand in a somewhat different position from ordinary employers. They have been entrusted by the public with large powers and privileges; they are, to a certain extent, public servants, and have important public duties to perform; and anything which tends to prolong a dispute of this kind, which imposes heavy loss and great inconvenience upon the public, anything which tends to increase that loss and inconvenience unnecessarily, is in my opinion unjustifiable. In two respects especially the Directors of these companies took up a position which cannot, in my opinion, be defended, and which tended to prolong the strike. In the first place, I do not think they were right in refusing to meet the officials of the Trades Union. My noble Friend says he is quite sure that if I had a difficulty with persons in my employ I should certainly refuse to discuss the question in dispute with the officials of any Union. In that he is wrong, for I should in these days certainly not take that course. If there was (which there is not) a Labourers' Union in Yorkshire, and a strike were to take place among the labourers in my employ in connection with that Union, I should think it my wisest course, and I should certainly adopt that course, to go at once to the officials of that Union and deal with them. They would be the men who would have the most influence with the labourers, who might very likely have had a hand in getting up the strike in order to put forward whatever demands they might have to make or to remedy any grievances they might wish redressed, and the wisest course, I am confident, would be to go at once to those officials and enter into communication with them. I think, therefore, that the refusal on the part of the Scotch Railway Directors was wrong, and, under the circumstances, unjustifiable. Then, further, I think myself that the demand which was made by them that the men should return unconditionally to their work after the strike commenced without having the questions in dispute settled, a demand which put an end, as I believe, to the various attempts at conciliation which were made, was wrong. I felt that that demand was one which the Directors had better not have made. The strike having taken place, I think if they desired, in the interest of everybody to bring it to an end, their wisest course would have been to enter into communication with those who were the representatives and had the confidence of the men, with the view of coming to such terms as might upon fair and reasonable grounds bring the strike to a termination as soon as possible. Those were the grounds upon which I gave expression to the opinions to which my noble Friend has alluded. I adhere to those opinions now, and I say specially, in conclusion, that it does appear to me to be most unwise, and if I may be pardoned for saying so, most foolish in any body of employers in these days to attempt to ignore the existence of Trades' Unions. They exist, and will continue to exist. They have conferred great benefits, I believe, upon the community, though they may have made, as all other bodies have made, mistakes from time to time; and I am quite certain that the only wise course for employers in the present day to pursue is to acknowledge the existence of the Unions and to work with them as far as they can.

THE MARQUESS OF TWEEDDALE: My Lords, I should not have thought it necessary to trespass on the time of your Lordships if my name had not been referred to by my noble Friend on my left (Earl Wemyss); and if the noble Lord who has just spoken had not attempted to explain the remarkable expressions which he used in a letter upon the subject, characterising the position taken up by the Directors of the North British Railway in connection with this strike as unjustifiable. I have no right to speak for the other companies; but I may say in respect to them that the attitude which they took up was identical with that assumed by ourselves. I have no desire at any length to occupy the time of the House, and I shall confine myself as far as possible simply to a statement of the position taken up and the circumstances under which it was taken up. It has been the invariable practice of the North British Railway Company, on occasions of complaints being made connected with the service, to receive the representative of the particular grade or department in which the complaint has arisen, and to discuss the complaints, and, if well founded, apply a remedy for them. This practice has been often adopted. In 1883, for instance, the different departments of the Railway Company approached the Directors, and, on that occasion, various concessions were made. Early last year similar approaches were made by one or two of the departments, and concessions were again made; but on that occasion several of the departments refused to approach the Directors in the manner in which they had been accustomed to bring forward complaints, and insisted that they should be received together *en masse*, headed by the Secretary of the Associated Societies of Railway Servants in Scotland. Now, whether rightly or wrongly, the Directors decided not to receive the men *en masse*, and not to receive them headed by the Secretary of the Associated Societies of Scotland. Your Lordships will easily understand that decision in respect of the fact that the grievances of the different departments are not the same. The duties are very different. Take, for instance, the grievances of the signalmen. They desired that more of their number should be included in a working day of eight hours, and even less. That was a totally different question from the question raised by engine-drivers, goods guards, and others. It was, therefore, for the advantage of the men, as well as the companies, that the complaints from those grades should be heard by the heads of the different departments without the presence of the Secretary of the Societies of Railway Servants. With regard to the representative of the Associated Societies, I desire, for myself, to say that I have no abstract objection in the least to receive a gentleman who might be regarded as an outsider, who really represents the views of the men, and who may be in a position to bind them to any agreement which might be come to between them and the company.

But in this particular instance the Directors had no reason to believe that the individual in question did adequately represent the men. No better evidence of that can be given than the fact that this gentleman, Mr. Tait, was entirely opposed to the strike. He took what may be described as a *plébiscite* of the men; it resulted unfavourably, and his decision was that there should be no strike. Now, what use would it have been to enter into negotiations with an individual who, in such an important matter as that, was unable to bind the men to an agreement? I think, therefore, the Directors were wholly justified in the attitude they took up with respect to those points. But then it has been said that the action of the men was justified morally, if not legally and technically, by the excessive hours which they had been required to labour. I am not going to dispute the fact that in some instances, not in so many as may be supposed, excessive hours of labour do occur; but that opens up the great question whether, even admitting everything that has been said as to the grievances of the men, the servants of the North British Company were justified in doing what they did and in ignoring and disregarding the agreements they had entered into voluntarily with the company, knowing all the circumstances connected therewith? Are there any circumstances which would justify such a breach of their agreements? I doubt it. If we can judge from what appears in the newspapers, the Army, the Navy, the Civil Services, and a variety of other branches of employment have just as many, and in some cases greater, grievances, but surely nobody would say that would justify either a mutiny or a strike in those employments. Now, I agree with the language which was used by a very important official of the Government in dealing with the Savings Bank clerks. What was the language which he used with regard to his conduct on that occasion? I am quoting now from the speech made by Sir Arthur Blackburn to the Savings Bank clerks a short time ago. He said—

> "There may be, no doubt, in the conduct of the affairs of a great Department, and in the discharge of its multifarious duties, occasions for difference of opinion and even for grievances to arise at different times; but there are legitimate ways of adjusting these differences and of remedying these grievances. As, unfortunately, now a very old Civil Servant, I desire to express my opinion, in which I believe you will all concur, that the very last resource which a servant of the State ought to employ is that of refusing to obey orders."

In the case of railway servants I should adopt every word of that language, merely altering the last words and saying that the very last thing a railway servant should have recourse to is striking without any notice, and committing a breach of his agreement. With regard to these hours of labour, I would venture to point out, and I have a Return here which I think your Lordships will be of opinion justifies what I am about to say, no doubt the hours of labour were excessive. That I will admit, to a certain extent; but what I dispute is that they were anything like of a nature to justify the conduct of the men. I have made an extract of cases in which railway servants have worked more than 12 hours at a time from the last Return submitted to Parliament. I have taken three companies for comparison, and I may say I have not picked them as being in favour of the North British Railway Company—it would be impossible to give them in the cases of all the Railway companies. First, I will take the case of the goods guards on the North Eastern Railway Company: of these there were in March 85 per cent. who were occupied on duty for over 12 hours; on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway there were 96 per cent., on the Great Northern 88 per cent., and on the North British 70 per cent.—that is to say, 26 per cent. lower than the highest in the other Companies, and considerably lower than any of the others. Taking the case of the engine-drivers and firemen on the North Eastern there were 81 per cent., on the Great Northern 86 per cent., and on the North British 70 per cent. In the case of signalmen there were on the North Eastern 8 per cent. who were occupied for over 12 hours; on the Lancashire and Yorkshire 18 per cent., on the Great Northern 9 per cent., and on the North British 5 per cent. That is to say, in March last the North British Company compared favourably with those three companies in respect of the number of hours worked by goods guards, engine-drivers, firemen, and signalmen who were, I may say, the principal men by whom questions were raised in connection with this strike. Now, it has been said that this matter of excessive hours has an important connection with the question of danger to the public. It is a very remarkable fact that if you look at this Return of the summary of circumstances which contributed to accidents in the year 1889, in comparison with the 10 preceding years, you will find that there were 113 accidents in that year, and those are divided by the Board of Trade into 14 classes. You would naturally expect, if you judge from what has been said in respect to the danger incurred through long hours, that a large proportion of these accidents would be shown here to have been due to that cause; but what is the case? Out of 113, seven only come under this class, which is not all comprised of long hours, the different classes being insufficient establishment, long hours, or inexperienced servants. That is to say, out of over 100 cases, seven only are included, and not really the whole of the seven, as due to excessive hours of working. Then your Lordships have heard it stated very often—and as I have not had as good an opportunity of refuting the statement as on this occasion, I will, with your Lordships' permission, take advantage of it—that the North British is one of the greatest sinners, if I may use the expression, in respect of the overtime question. What is the case in respect of danger to travellers? I find from this Return that of the 69 investigated train accidents, the largest number occurred on other railways, and only two were on the North British, with a mileage of over 1,000 miles, and a train mileage of 13,720,000. In respect to immunity from danger to passengers, you find that the North British —and I am sorry the representative of the Railway Department is not here, because he would, I am sure, confirm what I am saying—stands in the very first rank, and that in some respects it is in a higher rank than any other line. I have referred to that circumstance because it is one of the things most prominently put forward, namely, that the strike was justifiable—although not technically—morally, and in reality in the interest of the general public. That makes me regret somewhat the Resolution which was come to in another place the other day, which described the great danger to the public through the system of working overtime, and so forth. The fact is, that it has little or no connection with the subject in the management of railways. Now, I do not dispute that at one period when signalmen were kept a long time on duty, danger might and did occur; but in these days, when safety depends so much upon the appliances in use on railways, I think if gentlemen who take an interest in railway matters would turn their attention to requiring Railway Companies to use more efficient brakes, they would be better occupied than in denouncing the North British Railway or its directors. My Lords, the question really which we had to consider was this: In acceding to, or refusing, the demands of the men in the way in which they were made, we really had to consider whether, as directors appointed by the shareholders who provide the capital with which these railways are made, we in future are to direct the management of our railway ourselves, or whether the management of the railways throughout Scotland was to be handed over to gentlemen in the position of Mr. Tait and Mr. Burns. That was really the issue, and in deciding that we should refuse the demands of the men, made as they were, and that we would only receive them in the manner I have pointed out, I believe we took up a perfectly sound attitude, and one which is perfectly justifiable. To the general question of length of hours and the great questions of capital and labour, it is not my intention to refer now, more especially as a Committee has been appointed to deal with the one and a Commission to inquire into the other. But I must beg to be allowed to express my own humble opinion of these inquiries that very little will be shown by them beyond the fact that labour will always find its best friend in capital, and that however cunningly you may devise your legislation you will do very little in reality to affect the terms upon which capital will employ labour whether in regard to hours or in regard to pay.

*EARL FORTESCUE: I would ask your Lordships' indulgence while I offer a few remarks. I must say I was surprised to hear my noble Friend Lord Dunraven answer my noble Friend on my right by saying that he seemed to give no evidence for his statement. I, on the contrary, understood him to say he was quoting documents which had been supplied to him by the North British Railway. As out of the great number of instances of injury to property and of intimidation, and even injury to individuals, he in several instances said that no culprit was identified, we could not expect to receive accounts of trials in those cases; and really when we find cases mentioned of points disarranged and of obstructions placed on the rails, capable of overturning trains, whether those acts were done actually by men on strike or by sympathisers, it seems to me that the sympathies of the travelling public at least ought to be strongly enlisted against strikes carried on—I will not say by such means—but aided by such nefarious practices, or, rather, intended to be aided by such nefarious practices. When we are told of insufficient evidence of injury to individuals, surely the heroic courage and energy of a man who persevered with his work and went on managing his engine, though his collar-bone was broken, must not be forgotten. The man himself, I suppose, knew best whether a stone that was thrown at him had that effect; and surely those other instances of personal injury—I am not speaking now of abuse and insult—are quite reasonably stated by my noble Friend as affording a just argument that in some way or other insufficient protection was given to those who were engaged in the important public service of labouring in different capacities on the railways. And here I must be allowed to say in answer to the noble Marquess who contended that Railway Companies were placed in an altogether exceptional position and that they were bound to see that public danger and inconvenience do not result from strikes which take place among their servants, that surely if there are public obligations upon the Railway Companies, who are the employers there must be in the interest of the public corresponding duties and obligations on the part of their servants. The very important service of the railways was interrupted. We hear it stated that it is established that something like £1,000,000 was lost on account of that strike in Scotland, and this strike took place (this has always struck me as a very important feature in regard to this case) on the part of men who deliberately broke their contracts to go on strike. Well, the Railway Companies can hardly do more than make contracts with persons, not permanent contracts, but contracts terminable at a longer or shorter period for the performance of certain services; and I do not see what better precaution they can take than by making such terminable contracts. Surely they are not responsible or blameable for not immediately yielding to the demands of men who did not wait until the termination of their contracts before they suddenly threw up their work and discontinued their services at the moment when it would cause not only the greatest possible damage to trade and manufactures, but also inconvenience to private families all over the land. I, as a consistent Liberal years ago, remember supporting Lord Shaftesbury in his endeavours to prevent helpless children from being overworked in factories. I followed in that the lead of other consistent Liberals like Lord Russell, Lord Palmerston, Sir George Grey, and Mr. Macaulay, and we had the support also of men like Lord Beaconsfield (then Mr. Disraeli) and Lord John Manners—Conservatives—though it was against the Conservative Government we had to fight including Sir Robert Peel, Sir James Graham and their then Colleague Mr. Gladstone. But though it was thought necessary to take additional measures for the prevention of injurious overwork in the case of helpless children we at the same time equally maintained the principle of non-interference with adult labour, or the contracts which adult labourers made with employers. Liberals heartily rejoiced, I heartily rejoice for one, that the laws relating to employment as between employers and employed were put on a juster and better footing very much by the labours of the noble Lord, Viscount Cross when in the other House. But if it is right that the liberty of men of the wage class to combine and to unite for legal purposes should be protected; on the other hand it is as essential that the liberty of working but not uniting with the majority of other working men in the same business or in other businesses should be equally protected. I protest earnestly against the tyranny of those who wish to curtail, under the disguise of a humane interference for the protection of the helpless, the liberty of adults of sane mind to labour for whom they please, in what manner they please, and when they please, under contract with their employers; and to give notice at the end of their contracts that they will cease so to labour. But I hold that it is essential for the maintenance of law and order and, in the long run, of liberty that contracts should be enforced and protected between adults of sane mind, capable of making contracts.

*Lord BRAMWELL: I wish to say a few words to your Lordships upon this subject more to lament the existence of what I believe to be a very great evil and mischief than to suggest a remedy for it. I have always said and held that by the common law of the land there is nothing unlawful in a Trade Union and now there is nothing unlawful in it by statute. I have said the same thing of strikes; they are not unlawful and they are not even without, in many cases, great justification. I see nothing immoral in them where the only object is to raise the wages of the strikers, and as the noble Marquess has said, I have said and do say there is nothing unlawful in picketing provided that it is lawfully practised, but that is what it never is. I do not know the particulars of the Scotch strike or of the Scotch picketing, but I do not see how your Lordships should reasonably have been led into a discussion whether it was a laudable strike and laudable picketing or not, because I should suppose that some of that picketing of which we have heard could not have been lawful under any provocation. If the men received any provocation, about which I express no opinion, the remedy was not to break the heads of those who did not choose to join them, or throw stones at engines and demolish stations. Their remedy was a different one. If the picketers had only done what they pretend and nothing more, that is to say, if they had merely met their fellow workmen in a friendly way and asked them to join, with nothing but a kind persuasiveness in their manner nobody could have objected to it; they would have a perfect right to propagate their own opinions and try to get persons to ally themselves with them. But that picketing would not pay; it would not be worth the trouble to picket in that way. The picketing must be of such a character as to inspire terror. That is the object of picketing, and it is one which succeeds tolerably well in many cases. Your Lordships have heard that I tried—I am sure I do not know how many years, I believe 20 years ago—a picket case in connection with a tailors' strike, which as far as I remember was for no other reason than an increase of wages. They would, I dare say, have said that they had picketed in the mildest possible way. My noble and learned Friend on the Woolsack was one of the counsel that defended one of the picketers, and got him off, and he will be able to tell your Lordships whether I am exaggerating. The men who had not joined in the strike were in such terror of these pickets that they did not dare to take their work home to the master tailors; they got their wives to do it in many cases, and it was pitiable to see the women in the witness-box—they were in the greatest possible terror, and described the treatment they had met with to be of such a character that it was not surprising they were in that condition of alarm in which they exhibited themselves. It matters not that there is no blow given—though I believe there are few cases of extensive picketing in which there is no blow given; if the conduct of the pickets was such as to excite terror in the minds of those picketed, and to deter them from doing their lawful work, I say it is an intolerable wrong and mischief both to the men who desire to work and to the community at large. It would be bad enough if it were some benevolent, intelligent autocrat who terrorised over people in this way; but when you consider that the tyranny is exercised by people who are actuated by ignorance and greed it is insufferable, even though there may be no blow proveable. I have said I do not know what the remedy for this is. You could not put down Trades Unions if you would, and I for one would not; on the contrary, I take the liberty of saying before your Lordships what I have said before in open Court, if I were a working man I should be a Unionist. I think that Trades Unions are useful institutions, and I would strike for good cause. You cannot get rid either of Trades Unions or of strikes. You have got now an excellent law against unreasonable intimidation—if one may use such an expression, if we can suppose there ever was any reasonable intimidation; the difficulty is in reaching the offenders and protecting those persons who are injured and oppressed by it, and the only thing that I can suggest as a remedy for what I believe to be a most serious mischief is that the persons picketed, those who do not agree with the pickets, should be carefully protected, and that that remedy should be applied which the noble Marquess has so well administered elsewhere, namely, that the law should be enforced, and people taught that they could not safely break it.

*The SECRETARY for SCOTLAND (the Marquess of Lothian): My Lords, I have to ask your Lordships' indulgence in saying a few words on the important Debate which has just taken place. I confess, on reading the Notice of the noble Earl on the Cross Benches, I thought he had introduced the subject of the Scotch Strikes simply as a peg on which to base the discussion he has raised on the general question of strikes. I have not been disappointed altogether in that; but, as the Debate has turned so largely on the subject of the recent strikes in Scotland, I would ask to be allowed to say a few words. I think your Lordships will agree that the speech which has just been made by the noble and learned Lord has gone very far towards answering the speech made by the noble Lord on the Cross Benches, for he—having, perhaps, more experience than anybody else in your Lordships' House in cases of this kind—has emphatically stated that he sees no remedy, except, perhaps, additional police protection, for those who may be subjected to and suffering from the picketing system. I should like to say a few words more, particularly upon two suggestions which have fallen from the noble Earl. I shall not go into the question which has been raised by Members of your Lordships' House in reference to the origin of the strikes—whether the Directors of the Railway Companies were justified in the action they took in not meeting their employed in the way in which they desired; or, on the other hand, the position taken up by the noble Marquess opposite (Lord Ripon), that he thought the Directors were not justified in that action. The question of the strikes and of what led to them is, I think, entirely outside the question put by the noble Earl. As I understand that question, he asks Her Majesty's Government whether they are prepared to take any measures in future to prevent the scenes which took place during the recent strikes in Scotland from recurring in future strikes. The noble Earl, in addition to that, made two suggestions. One was that the law as it at present exists is sufficiently strong (and I think he himself rather inclined to that view); and the other was, that if the law is not sufficiently strong, fresh legislation should be initiated in order to strengthen it. I will take the earlier suggestion first—namely, that the law is sufficiently strong, and consequently, as the noble Earl implied, was not sufficiently enforced. I desire most emphatically to repudiate any suggestion of the kind. The noble Earl knows, I think, as well as anyone that the initiation of criminal proceedings in cases of this description rests with the Lord Advocate, who, as the representative of Her Majesty in cases of public prosecution, is bound to see that all necessary proceedings are taken where the law has been broken; and I do not imagine that anyone who knows the present Lord Advocate will think for a moment that he is not likely to discharge the duty to the fullest extent. But apart from that I think the noble Earl must also be aware that the enforcement of the law in the different districts of Scotland rests with the Sheriff or Magistrates for each district. Let me take the case of Lanarkshire where the most important breach of the law took place—at Motherwell. When those disturbances began, the Sheriff, with the greatest promptitude, asked for assistance from Glasgow in the form of an additional Police Force. The additional Police Force that was supplied from Glasgow for Motherwell was not sufficient to meet the difficulties which had arisen, and a force of, I think, 119 men was obtained from Lancashire, I think, for the purpose of stopping the disturbances and, in addition, a troop of cavalry was sent from Glasgow, and on their leaving another troop was sent from Edinburgh. So that a sufficient force was sent for the maintenance of law and order in Motherwell, where the only disturbance really that occurred, I think, during the strikes took place. That it was amply sufficient to maintain law and order was shown by the fact that no further disturbances took place after the arrival of those various forces. The noble Earl has also pointed out that there were a great many cases in which personal violence was offered to the loyal servants of the Railway Companies. He has made that statement, but I should like very much to be informed if he or anybody else who is interested in the case can point out any case where information was given or where it was known that violence was intended to loyal servants of the Railway Companies, and where no steps were taken in consequence for their protection. I am quite sure the noble Earl will find that it is impossible to point out such a case. I would also ask whether it is possible that additional legislative powers could have any effect in such circumstances? As far as I know, wherever any breach of the law took place, ample precautions were taken for the protection of those who were threatened, and proceedings were initiated in regard to any violence committed. As the noble Earl knows, no doubt, proceedings are pending in Scotland at this moment, in reference to the action taken by people in those strikes. Then the noble Earl also referred to the subject of picketing. I have already referred to what was said on that point by the noble and learned Lord who spoke just now. It is a question of enormous difficulty and one beyond the powers almost of the legislature in any Act of Parliament to deal with. As the noble and learned Lord said, every one of these picketers is presumably, according to their own statement, acting in the mildest and most reasonable manner possible, that is their own statement in almost every case. In a very large number of cases, to my own knowledge, tickets have been issued to those who were engaged in the picketing stating exactly what is the condition of the law, and exactly what they were to do. Probably the noble Earl knows that also. Surely this makes it very difficult to prove against them cases of breaking the law; it affords *primâ facie* evidence that they have kept themselves within the limits of what they are legally entitled to do, and it is therefore much more difficult to prove a case against them. As the noble and learned Lord has told us, when about 20 years ago he acted as Judge in some picketing cases arising out of the tailors' strike which were brought before him, the noble and learned Lord on the Woolsack was able to make so good a case for the accused persons that he got them acquitted. That is with regard to the existing state of the law, and the presumption of the noble Earl that the law, as it is as present is sufficiently strong to do what he desires is, I think, correct. With regard to his other proposition that if not strong enough Her Majesty's Government should take measures to ensure due protection in future strikes, I think the noble Earl has conclusively answered his own argument. At the close of his speech he strongly urged the constitution of Boards of Conciliation. I feel sure he does not propose that those Boards should be initiated by Her Majesty's Government, for in that case their influence might be destroyed altogether.

*Earl WEMYSS: Self-originating I meant.

*The Marquess of LOTHIAN: I do not think I misunderstood the noble Earl. He also made allusion to the Commission which is about to be appointed to inquire into the labour question, and the noble Earl said he hoped that Commission would inquire into all questions between capital and labour, with a view to their settlement as soon as possible. Until the Commission has completed that inquiry, at all events, I think it would be quite impossible for Her Majesty's Government to consider anything of the kind. Speaking for myself, no one can possibly be more anxious that the relations between capital and labour should be organised on such a footing as was alluded to by the noble Earl (Fortescue), namely, that all labour should be absolutely free, and that everything which would interfere with that freedom, in the case of adults of sane mind, should as far as possible be done away with. That is my own view, and I am sure it is the view of all your Lordships; but to try and bring about that result by legislative measures would be, as the noble Earl must know, a most delicate and difficult, and almost impossible task.

*EARL WEMYSS: My Lords, it is only by courtesy that I may be permitted to say a few words in reply to what has just fallen from my noble Friend and also from Lord Dunraven in the earlier part of the Debate. The noble Earl implied that whatever cases I mentioned in illustration and support of my argument were not of much importance, and that I had failed to bring home the fact that this picketing and this system of intimidation which has been established has interfered with the freedom of others. The argument of my noble Friend who has just sat down was this: that the law has been enforced to the full extent, even to the extent of calling out the military at Motherwell, where there had been a disturbance. But it is not only a question of what may be done when there is a disturbance, or what is commonly called a disturbance; what I have said is, of two things one—you are, in fact, on the horns of a dilemma—either the law is sufficient, but has been insufficiently enforced, or it is insufficient and ought to be strengthened. Looking to the Act of 1875, "watching, besetting, or following" is a crime; that is to say it renders the person doing so liable to a penalty; and that if properly enforced must be sufficient. But that does not really cover such a case as occurred at Motherwell, where a sort of civil war went on for a time, where hard fighting took place, and the soldiers had to be called in. However, that is not so much the sort of case I mean as that of St. Margaret's Station, where the so-called "loyal" workmen were actually beleaguered. There it is very plain that the law, if sufficient for their protection, cannot have been properly administered. That is a matter for the authorities to decide. I say that if you have in a free country such a state of things as existed at St. Margaret's Station where there were men willing to work either with Unionists or not, willing to come and do the duty of those who had left, who had to be bedded, boarded, and protected, you evidently require to add another word of prohibition. To "watching and besetting" you would have to add "beleaguering," and make beleaguering an offence. Do not tell me that watching and besetting being made illegal is sufficient if, whoever is responsible for administering the law in Scotland can allow such a state of things to occur as a station to be actually beleaguered by a crowd of men "watching and besetting" those who are shut up within.

House adjourned at half-past Six o'clock,
to Monday next, a quarter
before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 6th March, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

CITY AND SOUTH LONDON RAILWAY BILL—(*by Order*).

Motion made, and Question, "That the Bill be now read a second time," put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

*(3.10.) MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I rise for the purpose of moving an Instruction to the Committee

"That, in order that the public shall derive some definite advantage in return for the right to tunnel under the public streets proposed to be conferred by the Bill, that they (the Committee) do insert clauses in the Bill providing either (1) for payment to the Local Authority of a royalty or share of earnings after interest on capital and working expenses; or (2) for specially reduced fares on certain trains between hours most convenient for the working classes and for clerks and others engaged in business, the Railway Company being required to run a specified number of such trains daily."

I must apologise for again calling the attention of the House to the subject of the Tunnel Railways. In the discussion which took place in this House on the 11th of last month there appeared to be a general feeling that there are important interests connected with the making of these railways; and I do not think that I unduly trespassed upon the time of the House in calling attention to the rights of the public, so far as the subsoil of the roads in the Metropolis is concerned, seeing that private individuals are applying for Acts of Parliament empowering them to take that subsoil without compensation or charge. On that occasion the right hon. Gentleman the Chairman of Committees did me the honour to acknowledge the propriety of the course I took as a Metropolitan Member, and he suggested that as the discussion had practically answered the object I had in view in calling public attention to the matter, in all probability not only the promoters of the Bill, but the Committee to whom it was about to be referred, would seriously consider the large and important question I had raised. I gathered that the right hon. Gentleman thought some practical result might come from the discussion. I suggested two ways of compensating the public—either by giving a royalty to the Local Authorities or by devoting to the public a share of the earnings, after payment of interest on the capital and working expenses. The right hon. Gentleman suggested a third way in which the public rights might be recognised, and that was by establishing cheap fares, having special regard to the fact that the land was to be appropriated without payment, or that a free permanent way was proposed to be acquired under Parliamentary authority. In deference to the right hon. Gentleman, and being satisfied with the feeling which appeared to prevail in the House upon the question, I withdrew the Instruction, and I certainly had the impression that the subject would be considered by the Committee to which the Bill was referred. I attended the meeting of the Committee, under the able chairmanship of the hon. Member for Preston (Mr. Hanbury); but, to my surprise, the counsel for the promoters, for all practical purposes, ignored all that had taken place in this House. He did, in a few words, refer to the Motion I had brought forward, but only to treat the matter with indifference, and to insinuate—for he did not state so in distinct terms—that I had withdrawn the Instruction because it had been unfavourably received, and because I had no chance whatever of carrying it. Now, that was not the spirit in which the Resolution was either received, discussed, or withdrawn. There was an understanding that the matter should be considered, and I was much surprised to find that the promoters, through their counsel, dealt with the question in this way. The Chairman said that the Committee knew nothing about the Instruction, and that they could only take cognisance of the Bill as it was placed before them by the counsel who appeared in their legal capacity in the Committee Room. I also ascertained that the promoters did not intend to do anything in the way of conceding a royalty, or share earnings, or specially cheap fares. Of course, the company are bound to give the working class trains which ordinary Railway Companies are required to give, but I do not gather that they propose to give any special cheap trains as a consideration for the free permanent way they are to acquire under the Bill. I do not propose now to re-argue the claims of the public, because it is generally admitted that the public have a substantial interest in the matter; and although the landowners on each side may have some shadowy claim, that claim is of no practical value. The only substantial interest in the roadway rests in the public. I ask the House to look at the question from a larger point of view, namely, the right of the people of London to the land over which the public streets run. This is one of the earliest of those railways which, in the end, will inevitably run like a net-work underneath London—not only small railways for the conveyance of passengers, but tubular railways to connect great lines on either side for the carriage of goods traffic. It may be satisfactory to the House to know that the promoters of these Bills take a most sanguine view of their prospects. In fact, the syndicate promoting these Bills have assured the Committee that they are prepared to give a guarantee to find the whole of the capital—some £3,600,000 for one of the railways alone. I propose to discuss the three Bills which appear on the Paper at the same time, seeing that the decision upon one of them will settle the fate of all.

MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): There may be a little difficulty in reference to the third Bill.

SIR J. PULESTON (Devonport): I am advised that the promoters of the third Bill are prepared to say that the matter shall be mentioned in the Committee, and that it needs no Instruction.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON: I was mentioning that the promoters take a most sanguine view of the prospects of these tunnel railways, and expect the undertaking to be enormously profitable. One of the companies proposes to provide facilities for carrying as many as 350,000 persons a day, and the railway which is already in operation from London Bridge to Stockwell, and which is admittedly not in a perfect condition, with unsatisfactory stations and approaches, has carried in a little over two months, 900,000 passengers. At a recent meeting the company owning that railway expressed the greatest satisfaction at the financial as well as the engineering results of the undertaking. Therefore, from actual experience in connection with the experiment of the South London Railway, there is conclusive evidence that the privilege asked for is one of enormous value. That being so, I think it is the duty of the House to take care that the public interests are very well looked after. The other night, in a discussion which occurred here, there was a general consensus of opinion as to the desirability of legislation in reference to providing cheap trains at convenient hours for the working classes. When the Railway Passenger Duty was partially remitted, in the interests of the public the House insisted on compensation being given in the shape of an increased number of workmen's trains, and now, when a far more valuable concession is about to be handed over to a Private Company, it is time to give practical effect to our opinions, and to extend a policy which has been recognised and affirmed over and over again. The people promoting these railways are a syndicate of financiers. I believe they call themselves "The Exploration Company, Limited," and they want to get a concession out of which they expect to make money.

An hon. Member: That is not so.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): The hon. Gentleman has somewhat exaggerated the facts in regard to the syndicate. The evidence before the Committee shows that some of these gentlemen are prepared to put in very large sums, and to retain their holdings.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON: That fact rather strengthens my case. The fact that the financiers who form the syndicate propose to retain their shares shows the value of the concession, and makes it more necessary that we should secure to the public full compensation the rights granted. I have no wish to throw cold water on the efforts of the promoters, and I move this Instruction without any hostility whatever to these railways. I have no interest in the matter except the public interest, and I have no wish to impose conditions which would prevent the railways from being made, or seriously embarrass the promoters. It is, however, such a good thing that I think they can well afford to give the public some substantial return for the large powers they are asking for. I beg to move the Instruction which I have placed on the Paper.

*(3.29.) Mr. SPEAKER: The proper form would be to instruct the Committee to insert clauses to carry out the views of the hon. Member. The first part of the Instruction, which explains the reasons for submitting it, is unusual.

*Mr. T. H. BOLTON: I shall be most happy to move the Instruction in the form suggested by you, Sir.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee to insert clauses in the Bill providing either (1) for payment to the local authority of a royalty or share of earnings after interest on capital and working expenses; or (2) for specially reduced fares on certain trains between hours most convenient for the working classes and for clerks and others engaged in business, the Railway Company being required to run a specified number of such trains daily."—(*Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton.*)

*(3.30.) Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I supported the hon. Member on the last occasion, and I very much regret that he did not carry the Motion to a Division. What has occurred since shows, I think, that it does not altogether answer to leave these matters to the chapter of accidents, and that it is better, as we cannot always trust a Committee to do what we wish, to give a definite Instruction. I agree that these railways will rapidly increase in the Metropolis, and that, therefore, the subject is one calling for serious consideration. For all practical purposes the roads are public property, and as these new companies are asking for important rights it is only fair that they should pay for them. One of

the great difficulties of London is the ever-increasing burden of the rates. They are growing by leaps and bounds, and the proposal in the Instruction seems to me to be a reasonable way of getting some relief for the ratepayers by making the promoters of these lines pay a royalty, after a fair dividend is paid to shareholders, to the Local Authorities. I trust that the Instruction will be passed and that it will be understood, in future, that when these companies make use of the subsoil of the public streets they shall pay the locality some distinct and definite sum for the privilege.

(3.32.) MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I rise for the purpose of opposing the Instruction. I took the liberty of saying, when the subject was under discussion before, that I thought the raising of the question was not in the interest of the London County Council. I now understand that the Committee have decided that, although there may be value in the subsoil, that value belongs by law to the frontagers. The view I take of the matter is that there is no value at all in the subsoil at such a depth, and therefore that no payment is due to anybody. Whatever the traffic may be, either under or over the roadways, the public gets the full benefit of it. The principle that the travelling public should pay towards the taxation of London is, to my mind, an utterly wrong one. It would be better for the public interests that the Local Authorities should maintain all the highways in order that the people should be able to travel cheaply. We have lately been dealing with the question of market rights and tolls, whereby provisions brought in for the consumption of the community are made to pay taxes. That is a vicious and exploded fallacy, and certainly ought not to be applied to railways and subways. What we want is that the localities should take national undertakings of this kind into their own hands, make the subways, and derive all the profit that can be obtained from them. It is right that they should be maintained by the public money, but not as a legislative source of taxation. What was said by the Chairman of Committees on the last occasion possesses great weight and authority, namely, that in granting a monopoly the Committee should see that the fares were as low as possible, and that the public should receive some benefit when the railway was successful.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: The Instruction only directs the Committee to make provision for cheap fares.

MR. ESSLEMONT: I have no doubt that without any Instruction at all the Committee would do its duty and provide minimum fares for the working classes.

(3.36.) SIR J. PULESTON: The hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Esslemont) speaks with some weight and authority, having been a member of the Committee which had this subject before them last year.

MR. ESSLEMONT: I have had the subject before me on three occasions.

SIR J. PULESTON: Then still greater importance attaches to the remarks of the hon. Member. The first question before the Committee is whether it is desirable that additional means of locomotion shall be established under the sanction of this House. That principle being affirmed, it is necessary to provide such increased means of locomotion, without giving an undue advantage to anybody. This Instruction commands the Committee to insert these special clauses; but a Committee now sitting upstairs have already arrived at a different decision, with full knowledge of the discussion which occurred the other day. If the Instruction is passed, it becomes an absolute command.

MR. HANBURY: Perhaps I may be allowed to explain that the difficulty of the Committee was in having no official knowledge of anything that had taken place in the House on the matter. That is why no attention has been devoted to it. But it is not too late to look into the question; and if the Instruction is forced upon us, we must consider the matter.

SIR J. PULESTON: I think that without laying down a hard and fast line, the Committee might be able to take cognisance of this discussion. My hon. Friend the Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) supports the Instruction, and yet he knows that, in reference to cheap fares, it may be practically impossible to carry it out and to divide a penny into fractional parts. At the same time, he proposes to make it obligatory.

*MR. BARTLEY: I merely said that I preferred one alternative to another.

SIR J. PULESTON: The Instruction, if passed, will practically command the Committee upstairs to insert these provisions, and I am afraid the result would be to throttle an important enterprise.

(3.40.) MR. COURTNEY: The hon. Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. T. H. Bolton) has expressed disappointment that more good has not resulted from the previous discussion of this subject. My difficulty is in knowing what the Committee have done in the matter.

MR. HANBURY: The Committee have not practically reached this question yet. It can only come up upon the clauses of the Bill, and we have only just begun to consider them.

MR. COURTNEY: That is what I anticipated, and in view of that fact I consider the Instruction premature. I would advise the hon. and learned Gentleman to wait until the Committee have finished their labours, and then when the Bill comes again before the House, if no notice has been taken of his suggestion, he can once more raise the point. I certainly deprecate the interpretation which the hon. Member for North St. Pancras has put upon the remarks which fell from me the other day. I said that the subject was an important one, and that it deserved full consideration, but I do not think I anticipated in any degree what the result of that consideration would be. All I expressed was my own view that if it was desired to make a revenue out of the undertaking the proper thing would be to provide some sliding scale in respect of rates, so that the fares might be reduced as the profits of the undertaking increased. I had no intention of speaking of the working classes alone; I had everybody in view. As the matter is still before a Committee I should strongly deprecate the giving of a mandatory Instruction or doing anything that would interfere with the deliberation of the Committee.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I am afraid that I must take a Division upon the Instruction.

(3.45.) The House divided:—Ayes 71; Noes 111.—(Div. List, No. 78.)

CENTRAL LONDON RAILWAY BILL.

Motion made, and Question,

> "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Central London Railway Bill to insert clauses in the Bill providing either (1) for payment to the Local Authority of a Royalty or share of earnings after interest on capital and working expenses; or (2) for specially reduced fares on certain trains between hours most convenient for the working classes and for clerks and others engaged in business, the Railway Company being required to run a specified number of trains daily,"—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton,*)

—put, and negatived.

SOUTH KENSINGTON AND PADDINGTON SUBWAY BILL.

Motion made, and Question,

> "That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the South Kensington and Paddington Subway Bill to insert clauses in the Bill providing either (1) for payment to the Local Authority of a Royalty or share of earnings after interest on capital and working expenses; or (2) for specially reduced fares on certain trains, the Subway Company being required to run a specified number of such trains daily,"—(*Mr. T. H. Bolton,*)

—put, and negatived.

GREAT EASTERN RAILWAY COMPANY (RATES AND CHARGES) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.—(*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*(4.0.) MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I rise for the purpose of moving,

> "That this House declines to proceed with the consideration of a scheme for the revision of Railway Rates which is based upon the full recognition of the legality of Station Terminal Charges, with respect to which the Standing Committee on Trade expressly refrained from formulating any opinion."

I have placed the Motion on the Paper because it is the only opportunity the House will have of dealing with the important question of the rates and charges of Railway Companies. I hope, with the indulgence of the House, that, in a certain measure, I may be allowed to deal with the question in a general spirit, and that my remarks may not be limited to this particular Bill. I believe that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade has stated—not in this House, but in answer to a deputation—his belief that this House is not a very suitable place for discussion of the complicated details involved in these Provisional Orders. I quite admit that this is so, and that it is desirable that all these technical questions should be submitted to the investigation of an ordinary Select Committee. The right hon. Gentleman himself proposes after the Second Reading of this Bill and of others of a similar character which appear upon the Paper to refer them to the consideration of a Joint Committee of both Houses. I think it would have been a more satisfactory course if the right hon. Gentleman had proposed to submit them to the Standing Committee on Trade which dealt with the original Railway and Canal Traffic Bill of 1888, of which Bill these Provisional Orders are the result. I believe that that Committee would be able to deal with these measures in a much more satisfactory manner than a Joint Committee; but if they are to go before a Joint Committee of both Houses, I trust the right hon. Gentleman will give us an assurance that the Committee will be a representative Committee, comprising Members who have some knowledge of the question, and who can be trusted to do justice as between the Railway Companies and the traders of the country. I believe there is a disposition to appoint what are called unprejudiced gentlemen, which really means gentlemen who know nothing about the matter. Personally, I am of opinion that it is of the utmost importance that the subject should be dealt with by a tribunal possessing special knowledge. Perhaps I may be allowed to call to the recollection of the House the exact circumstances under which these Provisional Orders come before them. The Railway and Canal Traffic Act of 1888 threw upon the Board of Trade the duty of drawing up a scheme for the classification of railway rates and charges, which, when completed, was to be submitted to the consideration of the House. In the Standing Committee on Trade there was a divergence of opinion as to whether the Board of Trade was the best tribunal to deal with the matter. Some of us thought that a special tribunal would more satisfactorily deal with it, and that it would be wiser to appoint a special tribunal unconnected with any Governmental Department. I am quite ready, however, to bear my testimony to the skill, ability, and zeal with which Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Mr. Courtenay Boyle, the representatives of the Board of Trade, conducted the investigation, although I am unfortunately compelled to differ from them in regard to the results at which they arrived. A long and careful inquiry was held in the Westminster Town Hall. Many able counsel were engaged to represent the interests of the Railway Companies and the great traders of the country; but, unfortunately, the small traders were not at all, or at all events quite insufficiently, represented. My contention is that the compromise effected as between the Railway Companies and the larger traders and manufacturers will be the cause of serious detriment to the small traders. The basis of the compromise is (1) concessions in regard to private sidings; (2) the principle of a graduated mileage rate for long distances; and (3) special rates for tram loads and truck loads. I, of course, am glad that the large traders and manufacturers have been able to wring some concessions from the Railway Companies; but the small traders have just reason to complain that the maximum rate should be charged on small consignments and for short distances. With respect to "smalls," the term by which small consignments are technically known, the Board of Trade tribunal has not investigated the matter, or, at any rate, have made no alteration in favour of the public. The maximum rates for small distances have been enormously increased, and, if this Bill becomes law, the position of the small trader would be immensely damaged or irretrievably ruined. The special question dealt with in the Amendment is station terminal charges. To terminal charges for services, such as loading, unloading, and delivery, the traders take no exception, provided they are not paid for where not performed. The Railway Companies allege that the station does not form part of the railway system, that it is provided in excess of that system as a whole, and consequently that the extra charge ought to be allowed. But that station accommodation is provided as much for passengers as for goods, and I never heard of a terminal charge being made upon a passenger. The legal position is somewhat difficult to describe. The Board of Trade tribunal say they find that the law on the subject was carefully set forth in the case of "Hall *v.* The Brighton Railway Company," in the Court of Queen's Bench, and that the Court allowed a terminal station charge. But that is not an absolute and definite expression of the law. The Railway Commission dissented entirely from the view of Mr. Justice Wills, and the Court of Session in Scotland took an entirely contrary view. I am told that the question will be brought before a higher Court as a test question upon an appeal in a case in which the Great Northern Company are concerned. The Board of Trade, however, accepted the decision in the case referred to. The railway system of this country has been built up by various Acts of Parliament, but many of them contain no reference to terminal station charges. The London and North-Western Company have 1,800 miles of system, but only 800 miles of it are, by the Act, to carry these terminal charges. Of the Great Western, out of over 2,000, about 900 miles only could claim power to charge terminal station charges under the decision in Hall's case. The Board of Trade tribunal in this matter have taken it upon themselves to decide what the law has not decided, and to make it universal over the whole railway system, and it will place upon the traders of the country a binding and absolute obligation for all time which would add immensely to their charges. To show how it would affect small agriculturists and traders, I will read a letter from a well-known trader of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, who says—

> "I think it may be of service to point out that the Board of Trade proposals would be most unfair. Take Class C, in which grain of or over two tons' loads would be carried. The station terminals proposed are 2s. per ton—result, two tons would pay 4s., while eight tons would pay 16s. The cost to the Railway Company for the station terminals would be the same whether the load was two tons or eight tons, yet, while 4s. would be earned by the companies in one case, they would receive four times as much in the latter. To propose to give a Railway Company 16s. for placing a truck in position for loading and unloading with the value of the ground for the time allowed for each consignment seems to me to be absurd, and I am surprised that such a monstrous proposal should be dreamed of by the Board of Trade. There are many instances on the North-Eastern Railway where the grain rate for four-ton lots does not exceed 2s. per ton altogether. No short-distance traffic would be possible if the companies get and exercise the powers proposed. If the companies could not charge them for short distances they do not require them for long distances. Having, along with another trader, had the North-Eastern Railway Company before the Railway Commissioners on the question of their hay rates, and having got the total terminal service charges fixed at 1s. 6d. per ton as a maximum, and as they gave up their claim to station terminals, we are at present in the position of getting hay carried at 1s. 6d. nominally, but really only 1s. 3d. per ton, while, under the powers sought, hay is put into Class 3, where station and service terminals together will be 4s. 8d. per ton, or more than three times the present rate or charge."

That is what a very practical trader says and probably other hon. Members may be able to give instances quite as striking. The President of the Board of Trade took a leading part in the consideration of the Railway and Canal Act of 1888 in the Standing Committee, and on this question of terminal charges, which some of us endeavoured to remove entirely from the purview of any tribunal that might be fixed hereafter, the right hon. Gentleman said—

> "That there seemed to be an apprehension that Railway Companies would be able to make not only their existing rates and charges, but terminals *plus* those rates and charges, thus putting an additional burden upon traders."

The right hon. Gentleman added—

> "That was not his intention, and if there was any danger of that he would accept words to deal with the matter."

I wish that the Committee had accepted that suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, and that words to that effect had been inserted. In that case I should not be asking the Board now to express an opinion upon this most important issue. The Board of Trade has come to the conclusion that terminal charges are to be accepted as a legal charge, because Lord Balfour of Burleigh said in Westminster Town Hall—

> "That it remains the law until it is upset; it remained the law when Parliament was legislating in 1888."

Therefore, as the Grand Committee did not strike out the terminal charges altogether, it was taken by the Board of Trade as constituting a right on the part of the Railway Companies to make those charges. If the House of Commons was to do any good it surely ought to protect the interests of the smaller traders who were not represented in the inquiry that took place. The Railway Companies have raised a cry of alarm in the matter. Sir Richard Moon at a recent meeting of the London and North Western Company predicted the ruin of the company if terminal charges are disallowed, and said it would be necessary to withdraw all proposals for the application of new capital. I hope that the House of Commons will not for a moment allow a threat of that kind to affect their decision. On the contrary, it is the duty of the House to do justice to the interests of the small traders who were not represented in the inquiry. I believe that the Railway Companies, who have always in the matter of rates pursued a most conservative course, would have been wise if in this matter they had taken a new departure and profited by the experience of the railways in America or Hungary. where the zone system is in force, and had endeavoured to revive waning industries at a distance from the seaboard by encouragement in the way of low rates. The result would have been such a development of industry as would in the end have largely recouped the companies granting such facilities. I believe that the Railway Companies are conducted as a great monopoly in much too rigid and conservative a spirit, and it is only by the pressure of the House of Commons that they can be induced to make that reasonable progress in the matter of charges which the public have every right to demand. It is in that spirit that I move the Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words, "this House declines to proceed with the consideration of a scheme for the revision of Railway Rates which is based upon the full recognition of the legality of Station Terminal Charges, with respect to which the Standing Committee on Trade expressly refrained from formulating any opinion,"—(*Mr. Philip Stanhope,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(4.20.) MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): In seconding the Resolution, I have only a few words to add to the able remarks with which my hon. Friend has introduced the subject. I do not intend to speak on behalf of the large manufacturers and traders, who are perfectly able to look after themselves, but I think that this opportunity, the only one which will be given to the House, ought to be taken, to let the Government know that there exists a very widespread feeling of anxiety throughout the country amongst agriculturists and small traders with reference to these Provisional Orders. I have no doubt that the President of the Board of Trade thinks that he has had already a fair quantity of Petitions and deputations on the subject, and that he has had a very troublesome question to deal with as between the great Railway Companies and the interests of the industries. But I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that he must only consider those appeals as a small sample representing the deep and widespread anxiety which prevails throughout the country concerning this question. I think that the reason why the Board of Trade has not received far more remonstrances has been principally owing to three causes. First of all, there is hardly an hon. Member who has not had his attention called during the last few years to the unfair railway charges and the unequal railway rates, and has not given his constituents serious and solemn pledges to obtain justice. Secondly, the careful and exhaustive examination which took place in 1888 went a long way to reassure the country, particularly the declaration of the President of the Board of Trade that in any classification of the rates the Companies should not be allowed to have maximum rates and, in addition to them, terminal charges. Thirdly (and speaking on behalf of the County of Gloucester) there has been a feeling of personal confidence in the right hon. Gentleman, which his well-spent political life in the county naturally inspired in all classes. It was felt that the interests, at all events, of agriculture were in good hands, and that we might safely, and with some confidence, await the result of the Board of Trade's proceedings. From time to time, too, the country has been assured by the right hon. Gentleman in speeches that these maximum rates were not, after all, anything to be greatly alarmed about—that, although they were put down as "paper" rates, which might legally be

charged, they were not rates that were intended to be charged! But the anxiety in the country is very great indeed. The Railway Companies are exceedingly strong and exceedingly able. They are an enormously powerful corporation, which is making a great outcry, and protesting that the new Schedule of Rates are going to bring on them ruin, devastation, and confiscation! We have heard this outcry before from other monopolists in days past. We know something of the rates of the Railway Companies in the west, but studying the figures of these Provisional Orders I can for the life of me see no reason for anxiety on the part of railway shareholders as to their dividends. I cannot see where the ruin comes in. The agriculturists are anxious specially about the milk rates. Every one will agree that this is a most important question from the point of view not only of the agriculturist, but of our great and dense populations that there should be a cheap and plentiful supply of pure milk. The rates originally proposed by the Great Western system were simply scandalous, and they have been reduced since last summer 30 per cent. A farmer who now sends his milk 40 miles, pays 9d. for a tin holding 12 Imperial gallons, and 2d. for the returned empty tin, making 11d., or something under 1d. per gallon. A farmer sending his milk under the new maximum rates this same distance of 40 miles the charge will be 10½d., terminal charge 4½d., and return carriage 2d.—or a total 1s. 5d., instead of 11d., or an increase of 50 per cent. On distances not exceeding 100 miles, the present total charge of 14d. will be increased to 20½, or 50 per cent. It is the terminals that so largely increase the rates. They make all the difference. The milk trade has been growing steadily for the last 40 years, and we wish to know why these terminal charges have been introduced when they have never been charged hitherto? These are not the times when anything ought to be done to discourage agricultural enterprise by legislation of this kind. A reasonable limit of 10 per cent. over the present charges might have been left to the companies; but I protest against giving them such a limit as 50 per cent. in order to increase their charges on what is one of the necessaries of life for the people. There is also the question of perishable articles, such as fruit, vegetables, butter, &c., to be considered. In future it is proposed, in the case of such perishable articles, to charge any quantity below 2 cwt. as 2 cwt.! I think that that is a most monstrous proposal, so far as the small farmer is concerned. We are looking forward to the development of allotments and small holdings as means of providing the country with increased supplies of milk, butter, vegetables and fruit; but it is proposed to put this block in the way, and to say, "Unless you send 2 cwt. you shall not be charged a reasonable rate." I am much interested in the question of how we are going to feed our growing population, and I cannot help thinking that the profits of the Railway Companies have been enormously increased in the past, and will be in the future, by the growing trade of the country, which they are really as interested as anybody in seeing developed. I hope, apart from political differences, the House will express such an opinion that the Committee will have courage to fix the rates and charges of the Railway Companies in a manner which shall be fair to the trading and agricultural interests.

*(4.30.) The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): In the year 1888 Parliament thought fit to impose a very severe and arduous responsibility on the Board of Trade. It is not possible to exaggerate the difficulty of the task imposed on the Board of Trade by Section 24 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act of that year. I am, of course, responsible for proposing it to Parliament; but I have very frankly to admit that if I had known what I know now of the extreme difficulty of the work I should have hesitated before I made such a proposal. It imposed not only the task—which in itself would have been sufficient—of codifying the railway rates and charges authorised by something like 900 different Acts of Parliament, and for 970 different Railway Companies; and of reducing chaos to order by enabling the trader and the agriculturist to know what services the rates were charged for, and whether they were legally charged—a thing which no man without

the most careful legal assistance and search can possibly tell under the law as it stands. This would itself have been a sufficient task for any Government Department; and that was really the original proposal of Government to Parliament. But in the course of the discussion on this matter in the Standing Committee, that Committee decided that the Board of Trade should do much more than that—that it should not merely codify the law; not merely, in plain language, deal with the existing powers of the Railway Companies under many Acts, but should also decide for the future what rates should be just and reasonable as between the companies and the public. Although I attempted to induce the Standing Committee to lay down some definite directions upon which the Board of Trade should act, though I saw at that time the extreme difficulty of the task imposed upon us, yet they were unwilling to do so, and both the Railway Companies and the traders, after consideration, preferred to leave to the Board of Trade the unlimited discretion conferred, and the Act was passed in that form. The hon. Member for Wednesbury (Mr. P. Stanhope) has referred in just terms to the work done by Lord Balfour and Mr. Courtenay Boyle in this matter. Nothing could exceed the patience and ability which these two gentlemen displayed in the conduct of the inquiry entrusted to them, which lasted for 85 days, and they have had the matter under further consideration since that time. The result is the Provisional Orders now proposed to be read a second time. Of course, I was aware from the beginning, as I suppose everybody must have been, that it would be quite impossible that the decisions of the Board of Trade in such a matter would satisfy both the contending parties. We have been assailed, on the one hand, by those who have spoken on behalf of the greatest of our Railway Companies, as having confiscated their property. We are assailed to-day by the two hon. Members who have addressed the House as if we had done hardly anything for the traders of this country. Is it not obvious that the truth must lie somewhere between these extremes? We have endeavoured to act not as an administrative body, but as a judicial body, between these conflicting interests. We have acted as a Court of First Instance in a matter, the gravity and importance of which it would be impossible to exaggerate. And now the decisions at which we have arrived, after the most careful inquiry, after hearing and re-hearing and considering and re-considering all that could be alleged, are before the House, and will, I hope, be referred to the only tribunal that can properly consider them—a Committee of both Houses. The hon. Member for Wednesbury has given us some credit. He has admitted that the large traders, and I think he might have admitted that all traders, will obtain in future very considerable advantages under this classification and schedule now proposed. He has admitted that with regard to service terminals he has no objection to our proposals. But he says that we have failed to deal properly with the question of "smalls," and that we have not lowered the maximum rates for short distances. I contest both of those statements. We have conferred upon traders this very considerable advantage in the matter of "smalls." At present, under the existing law, to which we have been bound to give consideration, the Railway Companies are entitled to charge whatever they think reasonable. We have limited that power in a very great degree; and with regard to maximum rates for short distances, or for any distances, if hon. Members will but give their consideration to the classification and the schedules, I am quite sure that they will see that the existing maximum rates have been very considerably limited in a long list of articles such as I cannot now detail to the House. That is the simple fact.

MR. P. STANHOPE: In a small minority of articles.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: No, in a large number. But the main point of the hon. Member's objection is that we have allowed the principle of station terminals. In the hon. Member for Cirencester's (Mr. Winterbotham's) remarks upon station terminals for milk and other perishable articles, he entirely omitted—as many others have done—to consider that actual rates ought not to be compared with maximum rates. That is a very elementary part of this problem, which does not even seem to have presented itself to the hon.

Member's mind. But more than this; he does not seem to have the least idea that at the present moment the Railway Companies are not compelled by law to carry milk or perishable articles at all by these quick trains, by which it is necessary in the public interest that they should be carried. The companies may refuse to carry them if they like; and they may charge whatever they choose for carrying them. What have we done? We have imposed upon them the obligation of carrying this species of traffic by these quick trains, often, no doubt, to the considerable derangement of their passenger traffic. We have imposed also the further obligation of carrying that traffic at moderate maximum rates—at rates which are admitted by the Central Chamber of Agriculture to have been considerably lowered since our proposals of last summer. This body says that the reduction on these rates ranges from 25 to 35 per cent. on full cans, and from 25 to 30 per cent. on empties; and the total amount of service station charges on each can has been reduced 32 per cent.

*Mr. WINTERBOTHAM: From the proposals of last summer.

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: Quite so. The Chamber considers the rate still excessive. But in this matter it seems to represent the views of those persons who, like the hon. Member, wish to take the lowest rate at which milk is carried at present, and to compel the Railway Companies to carry it at that rate, with a small addition of 5 or 10 per cent. as a maximum. Who can say that the price of milk will not be very considerably raised in future? Milk is not an article—and I do not think it will be—which is the subject of competition from abroad. Who can say that the cost of conveyance may not be very materially increased as compared with what it is at the present moment? We have taken these matters into consideration; and in fixing a maximum we have adopted the figures named in the schedule, believing that the companies will work within that maximum, as they have hitherto done, for the advantage of the farmers and the public in building up a trade which they have established without any maximum at all. They will not be so foolish as to hinder or to stop the development of such a trade, which they need not have established at all unless they had chosen. That is our view as to milk; but we are merely a tribunal of First Instance, and if hon. Members interested in the agricultural districts think we have not gone far enough in this matter, and that the milk rate should be still further reduced, their obvious remedy is to formulate their complaints on behalf of those who are concerned and petition this House, and these Petitions will be referred to the Committee, who will act as a final tribunal in deciding this matter; and if our proposals are too high they will reduce them. But the hon. Member for Wednesbury is not contented with that. He deals with the question of station terminals as one which ought not to be left to the Committee; and because we have admitted one principle to which he is opposed, though in other matters of equal importance we have done what he admits to be of great advantage to the trading public, he moves an Instruction which would kill this Bill. It could not be proceeded with if this Instruction were carried. What is the position with regard to station terminals? First of all, let me explain what they are. Station terminals are charges made for the use of accommodation at the stations and duties undertaken thereat before or after conveyance. The Standing Committee, I quite agree, did not express an opinion upon the legality of these station terminal charges. They left it open in the Bill to the Board of Trade to authorise them or not; but they distinctly pointed to their being authorised by directing the Board of Trade in determining them to have regard only to the expenditure reasonably necessary to provide the accommodation in respect of which the charges were to be made. But although they did not decide whether these terminals should be charged in all cases or not—they were perfectly clear that, if authorised, they should be specified and not included in conveyance rates. I do not think the hon. Member will deny that. There was a long discussion on this point in the Standing Committee. The hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester (Sir W. Houldsworth) proposed that

"In every case the maximum rates and charges should be deemed to include all terminal charges of every description other than service terminals."

It was pointed out that if station terminals were mixed up, as now, with conveyance rates, it would be very injurious to the interests of traders—first, because long-distance traffic would be compelled to pay a far larger proportion of charge for station accommodation than short-distance traffic; and, secondly, because traders who have provided their own sidings at considerable expense to themselves would be called upon to pay for stations in the shape of conveyance rates though they do not use the stations. Now, those two reasons induced the Committee to reject the Amendment of the hon. Baronet the Member for Manchester by a majority of 45 to 12; but, while they took this view, there certainly was in the Committee a strong feeling that the law should not give the companies both station terminals in all cases, and also their existing maximum rates. The hon. Member for Wednesbury has quoted some words of mine. What did I say? I said—

> "It appeared there was an apprehension that the Railway Companies would be enabled to make not only their existing maximum rates and charges but terminals, *plus* their maximum rates and charges, thus putting an additional burden on the traders. That is not my intention, and if there was any danger in that respect I would accept words to amend it."

No words were inserted; but I think I have acted up both to the spirit and the letter of the words I used in the Standing Committee. No doubt station terminal charges have been inserted in the Provisional Orders; but what are the facts? As far as legal decisions have gone, the law has decided that the Railway Companies are entitled to make these charges.

MR. P. STANHOPE: Not in Scotland.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I think any one who examines the different Acts on the subject will see that—if it be admitted that the decisions which have already been given were right — in the great majority of cases, at any rate, the law will enable the companies to make these charges. They do make them at present, and they are paid by the traders. Those were the facts with which I had to deal. I felt that, although for this reason it was just to accept the principle of station terminals, yet, as the matter had not been decided by the highest Court in the land, there was a possibility that the legal decisions might be reversed. Therefore, I reduced the maximum conveyance rates in exchange for the advantage given to the companies by setting at rest any doubts which exist as to their right to make station terminal charges to such a large extent that I have been charged with confiscation by those who have not thought fit to see that by allowing station terminals I give them something in return. I maintain that it is to the interest of traders to have station terminals separated from conveyance rates. Very well, then, what is the way to deal with this matter? If I have not gone far enough in lowering the conveyance rates in exchange for the concession of station terminals, let the Committee go farther. The hon. Member for Wednesbury would debar the Committee from revising these rates at all. He has said, and said rightly, that this is no Party question. This is a question affecting the interests of the whole country, irrespective of political Parties. The Board of Trade and I myself have, in regard to these companies, discharged the work imposed upon us by the Act of 1888. I do not ask the House to read the Bills a second time from a personal or a Party feeling in the matter; but I do ask them to proceed with the measures in the interest of all the parties concerned—the traders, the Railway Companies, and the general public. I can conceive nothing worse than that after an exhaustive inquiry the question should still be hung up for consideration by some future Parliament. In the interests of the traders themselves, who are at present under a law which they cannot ascertain, and who are subjected to charges as to which nobody can tell them whether they are legal or not, it is highly desirable to have the law put in a plain and concise form. I should like to give the House an ocular demonstration of what has been done. In these two Bills there is a classification and schedule of rates of the whole of the Great Western and North Western Railways. Such a classification at present does not exist, and the rates are scattered through about 70 different Acts in each case. It must be desirable that such a simplification of the law as that now proposed should be carried out. If the House does not approve the specific proposals of the Board of Trade in detail, cannot they trust to a Joint Committee of both Houses? I hope the hon. Member will not press his Amendment to a Division.

*(4.53.) MR. W. MC LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe): The right hon. Baronet, in the course of his speech, referred to the question of the rates for the carriage of milk. I should like to say a few words on that subject, because I have been for the last year Chairman of the Special Committee of the British Dairy Farmers' Association, which has carried on almost entirely the agitation on this particular branch of the subject, and has obtained no fewer than four modifications of the proposed rates and charges—a much greater amount of success than any other trading company has achieved. We have devoted a great deal of attention to this matter, and have come to the conclusion that not merely are the rates proposed by the Board of Trade excessive, but that the whole method of charging is cumbersome and unworkable in the extreme as far as milk is concerned. The right hon. Gentleman said that the hon. Gentleman who seconded the Amendment had not taken into account the fact that the actual rates cannot be compared with the maximum rates. I do not think the hon. Member could have overlooked so obvious a fact. We all know that we are dealing with maximum rates, and we remember that they are at the company's and not at the owner's risk. But I dispute the claim of the right hon. Gentleman that he has obtained important concessions on the point, because he has only proposed to lay upon these companies a statutory obligation to do what they are now voluntarily doing; and although it is true that the Central Chamber of Agriculture admit a reduction of 33 to 40 per cent. in maximum rates, which were put at 150 per cent. above existing actual rates, the fact is that the proposed maximum rates are still 100 per cent. above these actual rates. It is computed that 2 per cent. will cover the difference between owners and companies' risk, so that this point is not really worth considering. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that if we object to his proposal we can formulate our complaints, and can Petition Parliament. Well, we have recently Petitioned and Memorialised the Board of Trade. The right hon. Gentleman knows that the Dairy Farmers' Association and several Chambers of Agriculture, especially the one in Cheshire, have offered to be satisfied if the present actual rates are increased by 25 per cent. and made the maximum, for we believe that will give an ample margin for contingencies, especially as some of the existing charges are considered too high. For the conveyance of 12 gallons of milk 25 miles the Railway Companies asked to be allowed to charge 2s. 8d. The Board of Trade said they must charge 2s. 3d., but they have now reduced that to 1s. 4½d.; but the present actual charge is 9d., so that there is an immense margin for further reduction. We specially objected to the method of terminal charges for the carriage of milk. The companies were at one time willing to abandon them, and proposed a system of charging by cans at an inclusive rate, and, therefore, I think they may now be reasonably expected to have a rate per gallon which will include everything. By the present proposals there are no fewer than eight separate charges upon every gallon of milk conveyed by railway. There are the station terminals at either end—1½d. each, loading 1d., unloading 1d., loading of the empty can ½d., unloading ½d., the carriage of the full can and the carriage of the empty can. Every separate gallon of milk a farmer sends to market has these eight separate charges made upon it. These minute charges make the reckoning of the cost per gallon almost impossible, especially as some cans may be full and others half full. There is the terminal charge made per can, the charge per mile and the charge per gallon, two or three different ways of charging. Then in the Bill there is a most extraordinary provision under the head of perishable articles. Where a consignment is less than 2 cwt. the company is to charge as for 2 cwt., and the charge applies to milk as to other perishable articles. So that for sending a churn of milk the company may charge as if the weight were 2 cwt., they may charge per gallon by mileage, and there are certain terminals per can. It is impossible for the seller to reckon out the cost of the carriage of milk per gallon

when charged under two different rates, to say nothing of three different charges sometimes. The station terminals are upon the can full or half full, large or small. Where the milk dealer or farmer has been in the habit of charging per gallon, he is now to be involved in arithmetical difficulties. The terminal charges will amount to 6d.; that is to say 1½d. at either end, 1d. at each end for service, and ½d. at each end for empty cans. At Paddington Station where the Great Western Company receive 2,000 cans of milk daily, the company will receive £3,000 a year for service that will not cost them more than £350, and for station terminals the charge is proportionally extravagant. There is this additional difficulty for service charges that loading a can of milk requires two men, and one of these is almost always the farmer's man, at the roadside station, the other man being a railway porter; so that while the farmer provides half the labour he pays the company for the whole. Practically this is what it comes to, for although it is urged by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade that service terminals are optional in practice, that is not so, because the farmer cannot keep his man waiting about the station to load, or waiting for the cans to arrive, he is dependent on the services of the railway servants, and for these the whole charge is exorbitant. Of course these are the maximum rates, and I do not for a moment forget that, but if they are to be reduced, as possibly they might be in every day working, then the farmer is landed in a complicated system of fractions and decimals, with which his arithmetical knowledge is unable to grapple, and there will be an endless source of irritation to all concerned. It is exceedingly important that whether the rates are reduced or raised there should be cheap carriage for such a necessary article as milk. Nothing is more important in agricultural produce to the health of people in large towns than that there should be a cheap supply of good milk available; but I know in large towns like Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester, the average supply of milk per head of the population gives an incredibly small quantity, and it is evident that thousands of people never use milk or know what pure milk is. We ought to do all we can to help them to obtain from the farmers a good supply; but these rates the company are to charge, and if they charge anything approaching them, as I have little doubt but they will, will be almost prohibitive to the supply of milk to the poorer classes in our towns. I do not know why the charge on milk and perishables should be so greatly increased. The Railway Companies have raised objections to the Provisional Order that their charges are reduced, and various companies have had meetings of their shareholders and losses of thousands of pounds have been suggested; but if there is a general reduction in the carriage of other classes of goods why this excessive increase in the rate for the carriage of milk when this is an article upon which it is far more necessary that the rate should be reduced? I hope it may be found possible for me to move the Instruction which stands in my name when the Bills have been read a second time. It is—

> "That with regard to the carriage of milk, the proposed rates shall be simplified, and shall be made a rate per gallon varying according to distance, which shall cover charges of every kind, including the return of the empty can."

You have been good enough to tell me, Sir, that there is some doubt from a technical point of view, but I trust that when the Bills are read you will allow me to submit the point for your consideration, for I believe if I were allowed to move the Instruction it would be received with general assent. I do not wish unduly to tie the hands of the Committee but I do think we ought, in view of the importance of the subject to the population of our large towns, to indicate that whatever may be done in regard to maximum rates, the rates upon perishable articles, like dairy produce, should not be materially increased.

*(5.7.) SIR RICHARD PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I regard this as the most important question that has come before the House this Session. A question which deals so intimately with the conduct of the trade in the agricultural produce of the whole of the United Kingdom is a question which may well be described as of the greatest importance. Hon. Members who have to deal with matters upon a large scale may not have brought their minds to appreciate

the vast importance of the slightest detail of railway rates when it has to be considered in connection with an industry struggling for existence. It is not easy to exaggerate the importance of this Bill, it is not easy to master the intricacies of the points raised. Let hon. Members take up the Bill and attempt to master its contents. Let them go through the clauses of the Bill itself, pass on to the Schedules, the different parts, the close and long array of various articles by the thousands, allotted to the different classes, and they will see the Bill deals with matters the difficulties in connection with which can scarcely be overrated. I was not at all surprised to hear the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade announce to the House frankly that had he realised for a moment the difficulties he was about to encounter in undertaking for the Board of Trade to settle this question of Railway Rates he would have shrunk from that duty. I had the honour of serving on that Committee to which my right hon. Friend has referred, and I have the strongest impression of the difficulty and delicacy of a duty which ought to have been referred to a Commission, or to have been placed before the Railway Commission. I am glad to add my testimony to the zeal and care with which Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Mr. Courtenay Boyle have conducted a difficult duty, but it is obvious, and if they were here to speak for themselves they would admit this, that at the commencement of their task they knew very little of what they were undertaking, but they learnt their work as they went. Their first suggestions though falling far short of the extravagant proposals of the Railway Companies were still, on subsequent consideration, largely modified, and now we have the last revise in this Bill. We have the opinion of the Board of Trade, and we are asked to decide whether we agree in that opinion or not. I think it would be more convenient if we had the evidence upon which that opinion was formed. As a matter of fact, however, no part of the evidence given during 85 days has been laid before the House. The public prints no doubt contained from day to day certain information connected with the inquiry, but still it is the fact that we are asked to accept the conclusions upon the evidence, not having that evidence before us. In station terminals we are asked to accept a conclusion embodying a new principle; and upon what are we asked to do this? So far as my memory serves me in the course of those 85 days no open evidence was taken, no published evidence sent forth to the world, on the question of the method of arriving at these charges. I believe that a gentleman of great ability was asked to make a special valuation of the buildings at the railway station, but I have never heard of anyone having had the opportunity of seeing his Report. The evidence on which this conclusion is based has never been laid before the House. It will be convenient that we should be told what principle was adopted by this Committee of the Board of Trade in arriving at their conclusion. I was under the impression, derived from the President of the Board of Trade, that the endeavour was to approximate the maximum rates to the actual rates, and we have now before us certain proposals in the Schedules of a graduated mileage system for short distances and small consignments, and for long distances and large consignments, and all these we adopt. But I am bound to come to the conclusion on reviewing the result of the decision of this tribunal, that they do appear to me to have been more largely influenced by the large traders and large consignors over long distances, and that the interests of small traders for short distances and for small consignments have met with much less favour at the hands of the Committee. I judge this not only from the clauses which have been alluded to dealing with the question of "smalls" and "perishables," but from the fixing of the minimum at 2 cwt. That is fixed as the smallest amount to be charged, so that a trader will be charged for 2 cwt., though his goods may weigh only 2lbs., and I notice the same thing under other heads. The Schedule as it stands is directly hostile to the interests of the small traders. Now these are the days when the yeomen farmers of England have a right to be heard. Quite recently I had the opportunity of hearing what their views are, as expressed at a meeting of a highly representative character, attended by yeomen and other farmers. I found among them men of great intelligence who had taken the trouble to go into the details of these proposals as they affected their industry, and the general opinion was, and I do not wonder at it, that which I have expressed. Looking around them what do they see? They see these great Railway Companies, the creatures of the State, with a great monopoly and a great success, with the value of their shares mounting from day to day, so that on the leading lines a £100 share is worth £150. They look at these things and then they look at home, and contemplate the difficulties with which their own industry is struggling, and they find those difficulties enhanced by the imposition of unreasonable rates of railway carriage, I say the small farmer has a right to be heard. It is a fact that the Railway Companies will not deny, that these companies possess at many rural districts an absolute monopoly, and when they have no station of any other company to enter into competition with them, a company can do what it chooses—the trader is at its mercy, and it is then that these maximum rates will be put in force. The maximum rates over long distances may be accepted, for as a fact that maximum has not been approached, but it is on the flow of trade from small holders, from small village or roadside stations, that these station terminals and these short distance clauses will press so heavily—will impose the power of charging rates which if charged in their entirety will bring ruin on the industry of the small farmer. It is urged the Railway Companies will not charge these excessive rates, but I am not assured of that. The late Mr. Grierson was one of the ablest of railway managers, a fair, and honest, and honourable man; but he distinctly announced as the guiding principle for railway rates was this, "Let the traffic pay as much as it will bear." This being the acknowledged guiding principle, what have we at these wayside stations in rural districts where there is no competition for the traffic? We have the maximum rates, *plus* the short distance clauses, *plus* the station terminals, the service terminals, and everything else, altogether amounting to a rate the company will have the power to enforce and will enforce if in their view the traffic will bear it. The principle of station terminals about which so much has been said, is one that is indefensible in its present shape. I pass by for the moment the larger aspect of the question, taking note of what has been said by the President of the Board of Trade that the decision of what is practically an inferior Court—a decision not accepted by the traders—is naturally the only decision that now is recognised, and I ask how has the figure of 1s. 6d. been reached as the fixed terminals applicable to every station for every distance and for all sorts of traffic? We have not yet been afforded any statement showing how this was arrived at, and I can only surmise that it is following the practice of the Railway Clearing House, where the companies adopt a station terminal of 1s. 6d. in their arrangements *inter se* for their own convenience, and that this has been blindly taken by the Board of Trade as an easy way out of the difficulty. But see how it works in large consignments of hundreds of tons and in small consignments, to have this 1s. 6d. terminal on either end. In addition to the maximum short distance clauses is it not obvious that 1s. 6d. terminal imposed on agricultural produce, butter, eggs, milk, going from station to station for short distances, that this terminal charge will lead in many cases—

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: The hon. Baronet is mistaken as to the charge in such cases.

*Sir R. PAGET: I am glad to be corrected as to these terminals; but there are cases where for comparatively short distances the 1s. 6d. will be imposed as for long distances, and we have not been told the reason for this. There is a certain sweet simplicity about the arrangement that no doubt has been attractive. The farmers are strongly of opinion that the infliction of the terminal is in many cases the imposition of a new charge. This question has been so largely dealt with that I will not follow it up beyond saying that one of the objections taken the other day was this: that if Parliament passes the Bill in its present form it will seem to be a sort of indication to the Railway Companies of this kind—"You have not hitherto made charges for terminals, for return of empties, or for loading or unloading, and now these are set out as indicating charges you have a right to make." What farmers feel is that practically a change is introduced, and that which was not legal before is made legal now, and may militate against the agricultural interest. There are one or two other points upon which the views of farmers are entitled to be heard. There is the question of the detention of trucks or demurrage. It has been stated as within the experience of a farmer that he was charged a 2s. rate on this account for detaining trucks a couple of days with hay or fodder, while hay coming from Holland is allowed to remain 14 days without such charge. Now, if this can be substantiated, I think there is reason to complain. I do not know if this is considered undue preference, but I should like the Attorney General to turn his attention to this with a view of getting more clearly at the law of demurrage; it is by no means so clear as traders desire it should be. The rates on perishables by passenger trains are directly against the interests of small traders, and then there is another point upon which the farming interest complain, that there is no distinction made in the carriage of fat and lean cattle, the rate being the same for both. They also complain of the charge for the cleaning of trucks. It has never been paid before, and they contend that there is no reason because Parliament has for the sake of preventing the spread of disease imposed upon Railway Companies the duty of keeping cattle trucks white and clean, that the charge should straightway be shifted on to the shoulders of the farmer. On the carriage of manure much might be said. Owing to the peculiar arrangement of the Schedule, large classes of manure which it is to the public interest—for everything that contributes to fertilising and improving the cultivation of the soil is of public interest—large classes of manure will be subject to an excssive rate. As a matter of public policy, everything that has to do with the cultivation and distribution of food should be considered and rates should be imposed to improve distribution, and a good case has been made out for asking the Railway Companies to make further modifications. Speaking on behalf of the agricultural classes, we have no desire to despoil the Railway Companies, nor do we believe in the possibility of that despoilment. There was an article in the *Economist* the other day, in which the writer, after setting out the estimate of the companies that they would be subjected to an enormous loss, divided among eight or nine leading companies, of £380,000, proved by the clearest figures, and taking their own basis for calculation, that the loss could not be more than a quarter per cent on their dividend. This upon their own figures, upon which they are not likely to have erred. I do not deny for a moment that in many particulars this proposed legislation is very acceptable. It is the outcome of prolonged inquiry, and it effects a compromise between the traders on the one hand and the companies on the other. I, for one, should be most glad that differences should be put an end to, provided always we could secure such modifications as we have a right to ask. I should like to have heard a little more from the right hon. Gentleman as to the details of the concessions. He stated that the companies were in many cases being allowed the benefit of station terminals in return for largely reduced conveyance rates. But the trades of England wish to know the instances in which the rates have been reduced, and to whom the benefit has been given of being allowed to charge station terminals. The Joint Committee to whom the Bill is to be referred has before it a task of great difficulty. They have to act as a Court of Appeal from the opinion expressed by the Board of Trade after a prolonged inquiry of 85 days. I trust that, to prevent undue labour, the Committee may come to an agreement with regard to the points that are to be fought. I know that on some points the interests of the agriculturists and traders will be clearly defined and will be well placed before the Committee of both Houses. But I do trust, in the interests of all concerned, that we are approaching the time when this question may come to an end; but that can only be by those who go before the Committee determining to bring it to an end. If, however, they go with the intention of re-opening every question discussed before the Committee of Inquiry and the Board of Trade, then it will be hopeless and endless. I sincerely hope that the points will be confined within the narrowest possible compass. It is a misfortune that the appeal in the case of Hall has not yet been decided, for it would possibly reverse the decision of the Queen's Bench. I regret, too, that the Returns promised by the President of the Board of Trade, of the actual rates of Railway Companies, have not yet been presented, for I think they would have been useful to us in this discussion. Altogether the case is one of extraordinary intricacy and importance, and those on whose behalf I have spoken think they have a right to have their objections heard and considered.

*(5.52.) MR. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): Sir, I think the House will arrive at a just conclusion as to the proper mode of dealing with this Bill and other Bills now before the House, by recalling the circumstances which led to their introduction. The Railway Rates Committee of 1881, appointed to investigate the complaints of traders, and especially of farmers, who alleged that they were overcharged for short distances on non-competitive lines, ascertained that those complaints were well founded. In defence, the Railway Companies asserted that they were entitled to make an indefinite charge for station terminals. It was clearly shown before the Committee that in respect of long distance and non-competitive traffic the companies were not exceeding their maximum rates; and that the maximum rates in such cases were practically valueless. The Railway Companies could not charge anything like the maximum rates. The addition of station terminals provided by the Bill will have the effect of making maximum rates for short distance traffic equally valueless.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The hon. Member does not understand the Bill. It reduces the maximum rates for short distances in respect of non-competitive traffic.

*MR. BARCLAY: I am quite willing to admit the rates may be lower, but it has been shown by my hon. Friend the Member for Wednesbury that with the addition of station terminals the maximum for hay would be higher than it was before. And in regard to milk, the hon. Member for Crewe has shown that no benefit would result. Looking at the tables I find that the maximum rates for the lower kinds of fish, irrespective of station terminals, is £8 a ton from Forfarshire to London, while the existing rate for salmon is £4 a ton. I put it to anyone whether advantage will result from fixing maximum rates which the Railway Companies find it impossible to charge. These proposals, instead of redressing the grievances of the farmers, will have the effect of binding the burden on their shoulders. I do not think that this House intended by the Railway and Canal Act, 1888, to give the Railway Companies power to exact higher rates, but cases have been instanced in this Debate showing that farmers and others interested in short-distance traffic will not be in the least benefited by this Bill, but will have the grievances of which they complain imposed upon them under the sanction of an Act of Parliament. The question of station terminals in past times has been decided by the Courts of Law in favour of the traders. But the companies depend upon the recent decision in the case of "Hall." Traders are anxious to have a decision upon the point, because it is the keystone of the whole position with regard to short-distance traffic. The case of "Hall" was decided against the companies by the Railway Commissioners—a common sense tribunal, appointed by this House to consider railway questions. The traders carried that case to a division of the Court of Queen's Bench, hoping ultimately to carry it to the Court of Appeal so as to obtain an authoritative decision of the law, but a technical defect in the Judicature Act prevented the appeal. But so certain were they that the point at issue was an essential element in the question that they raised another case, that of "Sowerby *v.* The Great Northern Railway Company." The Railway Commissioners considered themselves bound by the decision given in the case of "Hall," and decided accordingly. An appeal has been taken against that decision of the Railway Commissioners, to the High Court of Appeal, and I am informed by the solicitor in charge of the case that it may be heard next Monday week. It seems to me that it is of the greatest importance that the House should have before it an authoritative decision on the question of terminals by the Court of Appeal before it pronounces a definite opinion on these Bills. I do not suppose that the President of the Board of Trade desires to increase the legal powers of the Railway Companies. When the decision of the Court of Appeal has been given the House will be in a better position to judge whether the proposals embodied in this Schedule and in the various Provisional Order Bills before it ought to receive its approval. In any case, the Committee cannot sit on these Bills until after Easter, when, as I have already said, a decision in the case of "Sowerby *v.* the Great Northern Railway Company" may be expected. Therefore, I submit that we ought to defer these Bills for further consideration after Easter. If the decision is against the traders, we shall have to try and make the best of the Bills; but if in their favour it would be a very extraordinary circumstance that this House, which has been appealed to to protect the farmers, should, previous to the anticipated decision, legalise the grievance of which they complain I therefore respectfully move that this Debate be now adjourned for the purpose I have indicated, and I think it would onle be a fair and considerate mode of treating the representations of the farmers on this subject if Her Majesty's Government would assent to this course.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg, Sir, to second the Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned." —(*Mr. Barclay.*)

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: If the object of the hon. Gentleman who has just spoken was merely to move the Adjournment of the Debate, I would suggest, with all deference, that he might have made that proposal without speaking at the length he has; but, as the Motion has been made, I would ask the House to consider the position in which the matter now stands. It is obvious that the Joint Committee of the two Houses to which these Bills are to be referred, and to which the Act of Parliament says we should refer them, will have a very long and difficult task before them. If they are able to complete their task, and if the Bills to be sent to them are to become law within the limits of the present Session, that is about as much as will be possible. I submit to the House that if the course suggested by the hon. Member be adopted it would be doing its best to render it utterly impossible that these Bills, whether the House may approve of them or not, should become law this Session. I would further submit to those who object to the Bills that they will have ample opportunity when the Bills have been reported by the Joint Committee of discussing the present question over again, and of pressing their objections to the point of opposing their further progress. The hon. Member opposite has told us that in a fortnight or so he expects a certain decision will be given by the Court of Appeal on this question. All I can say is that he is a very sanguine man. He seems to forget that the law is full of delays, and that the decision he anticipates may be deferred beyond Easter; but, at any rate, if that decision is not given by the time the Bills are returned to us by the Joint Committee, it is still possible that the statements made to-night can be repeated. Therefore, I submit that hon. Members will be in no worse position than they are in at present if they allow us to proceed with the Bills at once. If they decline to do this they certainly will prevent our being able to pass these Bills into law, and thus may defeat the very object which they themselves have in view.

(5.55.) MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I will appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for Forfarshire (Mr. Barclay) not to press his Motion for Adjournment. I have listened to a considerable part of this Debate. I heard the speech of the hon. Member for Somersetshire, but was unable to hear that of the President of the Board of Trade in consequence of my being engaged elsewhere. I may, however, say that while I agree with a good deal of what has been said, I think that the question under discussion is essentially one for the consideration of the Committee. I know of no question more difficult or more complicated, or which requires more careful investigation and judgment than that which it is now proposed to submit to the Joint Committee, and I can only express the hope that these Bills will be sent before the Committee as soon as possible. After all, this is only a preliminary stage, and not the final one. The Committee will have power to deal with all the questions that have been raised as to terminals and maximum rates, and hon. Gentlemen who have spoken will be able to appear before the Committee and give evidence, as was the case in 1881. It is most important that the work should be begun as soon as possible, as the inquiry is likely to be a long, laborious, and anxious inquiry. With regard to the legal decision spoken of by the hon Member (Mr. Barclay), if that is given in a week or even in a month, or at almost any time this Session, it will be in sufficient time for the Committee. Complaints have been made as to the way in which the work has been done; but I must say that I give the utmost credit to the noble Lord who presided over the Inquiry, and to Mr. Courtenay Boyle, of the Board of Trade, for the very admirable manner in which they performed their task. I never knew a case in which a heavy and laborious inquiry such as that in which they were engaged was conducted with greater skill, knowledge, and ability, than the inquiry conducted by those two gentlemen. I ask the House to let these Bills go into Committee as soon as possible, because the whole of the questions affecting the interests of farmers and small traders — questions of station terminals and other terminals and maximum charges—can be dealt with by the Joint Committee. That Committee will doubtless be a strong Joint Committee of the two Houses, and this House should bear in mind that it is not likely to appoint on its Committee a number of gentlemen who are more favourable to one interest than the other. It will, doubtless, be a Committee that will do justice to all parties, and I think it is to the interests of this House and of all who care about the subject that these Bills should be sent to that Committee as soon as possible. I would point out, further, with regard to the question of rates——

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! The right hon. Gentleman must recollect that this is a Motion for Adjournment.

Mr. MUNDELLA: I was only pointing out that the Board of Trade exercise a very important influence in these matters. I hope the House will let the Bills go to a Committee as soon as possible.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. Gentleman withdraw his Motion?

*Mr. BARCLAY: No, Sir; I press the Adjournment.

*(6.1.) Mr. GROTRIAN (Hull, E.): This is a very important question, and it seems to me that we are in danger of not being able adequately to discuss it by the intervention of this Motion for Adjournment. As you, Sir, pointed out to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield, he was unable to deal with points having a most important bearing on the questions at issue. I am in the same position. I hope the hon. Member will not press the Motion for Adjournment; but if he does, teat it will not meet with support, and we shall be able to resume the discussion after the Division.

(6.3.) Mr. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): I was strongly impressed by the arguments of the hon. Member for Forfarshire, and agreed with him that there was good reason for the Adjournment of the Debate; but after the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield, I feel convinced the more desirable course to pursue would be to send the Bills quickly to a Committee. Therefore, I hope the Motion for an adjournment will be withdrawn.

*(6.4.) Mr. BARCLAY: After the expressions of opinion to which I have listened, I beg to ask leave to withdraw my Motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question again proposed.

(6.5.) Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I am obliged to trouble the House with a very few words. I represent a constituency where the agricultural depression has reached its lowest depth. There the farmers manage to eke out a precarious existence by sending milk to the London markets. If this Bill passes into law that trade will be knocked on the head. An hon. Member opposite has rather understated the case. Now, a 12-

gallon tin of milk can be sent from Essex to London for 6d., but this Bill will make the charge 1s. 5d.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: No.

MAJOR RASCH: The Great Eastern Bill will enable the charge to be raised 140 per cent., to say nothing of the cost of returning empties. At the present moment there are absolutely no terminal charges, but if the Bill becomes law there will be a terminal charge of 6d. for each 12-gallon tin. The result will be ruinous to the Essex farmers, and London will be supplied with iced milk from Holland or else will have to depend on London milk produced under the most adverse and deleterious circumstances. The Essex farmers may be divided into two categories: those who are ruined and those who will be ruined by the passing of this Bill, for it will prove the last straw on the back of the agricultural camel. No doubt we shall have the usual procession of railway directors who will tell us that these charges are only a matter of form. But the President of the Board of Trade, in the Debate on the Cheap Freights Bill, admitted that the tendency of Railway Companies was, in course of time, to reach the maximum charges; and if such rates as these are put into the Bill my constituents will refuse to look on them as a matter of form.

*(6.9.) SIR HUSSEY VIVIAN (Swansea, District): I do not rise to support the Amendment of my hon. Friend, nor to detain the House, except for a few minutes. We have heard a great deal about injury to the agricultural interest, but little has been said with reference to the hardships that will be inflicted on commercial interests. Looking to the district which I represent, I fail to see the justice of the proposals made by the Board of Trade. The Great Western Railway Company will be enabled, if they are carried, to charge on the South Wales portion of its system 35 per cent more than it charges on any other portion of its system. Why should that be allowed? It may be said the maximum rates were originally fixed so high because the railway was made at a time when the district was not so fully developed as it has since become; it is now one of the most important portions of the Great Western system, and there is no longer any justification for continuing an exceptional rate. I admit that these details might be better discussed in Committee, but it must be borne in mind that if this Bill goes to a Committee upstairs as proposed the only other opportunity the House itself will have of discussing it will be on the Report and Third Reading stages, and it, therefore, behoves us now to bring forward those points which we deem to be of first importance. We all desire to acknowledge the great industry and ability displayed by Lord Balfour of Burleigh and Mr. Courtenay Boyle in the conduct of this most onerous inquiry; but, at the same time, human beings sometimes form opinions which the great majority of their fellows cannot agree with, and some such decisions have, I believe, been come to by those gentlemen. Reference has been made to the hardships likely to be entailed by the short-distance clause. In my district that clause will have most serious effects. I know of several instances in which not only a six-mile, but a 12-mile limit will be imposed. I could name a case in which the Railway Companies would be able to charge 12 miles for a 3½ mile journey. These are matters which will have to be thoroughly sifted, and I, therefore, appeal to my hon. Friend to withdraw his Amendment. If he should press it to a Division and fail to carry it he would, I hold, defeat the very object he has in view.

(6.14.) MR. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I will not detain the House by going into the various points which have been raised; I wish to enter my protest in the firmest way I am able against that part of the Bill which deals with terminals. I am disappointed to find anything of the sort in the Bill. I had thought that after what occurred two years ago that question was dead and buried. But there is one detail in the Bill of some importance. The Railway Companies ask to be enabled to charge 1s. for every truck that is lime-washed or cleaned. I believe that that is an innovation.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: It is included in the ordinary charges now.

MR. GRAY: The same reply might be given to every criticism. I entirely disagree with the proposal to enable the companies to make it a special charge. It might just as reasonably be said that a person who rides in an omnibus or in a railway carriage ought to contribute to the dusting and cleaning of those vehicles. The speech of the President of the Board of Trade, who is in charge of this Bill, contained advances of a conciliatory nature, but my experience has taught me that, after speeches of this kind, when the Committee stage is reached, the right hon. Gentlemen who seem so conciliatory on the Second Reading, stiffen their backs against pressure, and we cannot induce them to bend to any extent to our wishes.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: My hon. Friend forgets that the tribunal to which this question will be referred is entirely beyond my control.

MR. GRAY: That is what I was coming to. I have to decide whether I will vote with my Party or with the hon. Member opposite. If the Government will give me an assurance that they, as a Government, will use no undue influence in the Committee, then I will vote for the Second Reading with great pleasure. If Government influence is to be used in respect to the question of terminals and other charges, the traders and agriculturists will have very little chance of getting their way. If, however, the Committee are to deal with these questions with a free hand, then I hope the Amendment will be withdrawn.

*(6.19.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: It is an important point that the hon. Member should know that the Committee will be distinctly a judicial tribunal, absolutely free from any influence on the part of the Government. My sole duty, when the Provisional Orders come back from the Committee, will be to carry out the decisions of the Committee.

*(6.20.) SIR J. SWINBURNE: I should like to draw attention to the milk question. The present policy is to get rid of the system of keeping cows in the cellars of London and other large towns—a system very apt to produce disease, for not only does it make the place unhealthy but the milk produced under such circumstances is far from good. Yet the effect of the passing of this Bill would be to encourage that system by making it impossible for farmers to supply London or other large cities with milk at a profit. I never in my life heard of terminals being charged for returned empties. I call that quite a new phase of railway extortion. I hope the President of the Board of Agriculture will give us his views on this subject.

(6.22.) MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I only wish before a decision is taken to point out to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, whose fairness and anxious attention to this Bill we all desire to acknowledge, that the question of terminals will go up to the Committee with his strongly expressed opinion in favour of terminals. I believe that those who represent agricultural constituencies have no objection to the recognition of the principle of some extra payment in respect of short distances, but we strongly object to the companies getting besides an additional allowance for such distances the power of charging terminals. Our complaint is that small traders in isolated districts are taken advantage of by the Railway Companies, and therefore the maximum ought to be kept so low as to protect these traders. I join with the hon. Baronet the Member for Swansea in hoping that the Amendment will be withdrawn, as a Division would prejudice our case before the Committee

(6.25.) MR. MARK J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I think that the sooner these Bills are sent to the Joint Committee the better it will be for all concerned. I can only say, with regard to the high rates contained in the Schedules, that hitherto traders in the South of Scotland have escaped these very high rates. We now send milk to London at 1½d. a gallon without any terminal charges. It is most important that these advantages should be continued, as, according to the charges in the Schedule, the cost of carriage will be 1s. 3d. a gallon—a considerable difference for the London consumer to sustain. I am in no way antagonistic to the interests of the Railway Companies. I know that theirs are enormous undertakings in which many persons have embarked their savings. But still justice ought to be done, and therefore I advocate the sending of these Bills to a Joint Committee as soon as possible.

(6.27.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I rise to express my views in response to the appeals which have been addressed to me from the other side of the House. Hon. members representing agricultural constituencies seem to be under a misapprehension. It is said that no terminals are charged at the present time; but it is forgotten that Railway Companies can charge anything they like for the carriage of milk, and they need not carry milk at all unless they like to do so. Now it is proposed to make it obligatory to carry the milk, and the charges are limited to a certain maximum. As far as the Government proposals go, they are clearly a gain to the farmer. There may be objections of detail; but those who have such objections to urge, should make their voices heard in the Committee. I hope that they will do so, and their representations will receive every consideration. Expressing my opinion as an individual, I think it to their interest to send these Bills to a Committee.

(6.29.) MR. ESSLEMONT: Must those who wish to raise these points appear at their own expense by counsel before the Select Committee, or will it be at the expense of the Government?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Arrangements will be made whereby all Petitions presented within five clear days of the sitting of the Committee will be heard. Further arrangements are already in progress between the Chambers of Agriculture and other bodies that all these interests shall be represented.

*(6.30.) MR. P. STANHOPE: With the permission of the House I will state the reasons why I think I may now withdraw the Amendment. I would, first, ask the right hon. Gentleman to give us an assurance that he will give us an opportunity of discussing the constitution of the Committee on some favourable opportunity, and before any decision is taken in the matter. I understand from the assurances which have been given to the hon. Member for the Maldon Division of Essex (Mr. Gray) that the Government is going to give an absolutely free hand to the Joint Committee, which will not only have an opportunity of discussing the amount of the maximum rates, and of the terminals, but will also be able to say whether terminals shall be charged or not. I hope the fact of my withdrawing the Amendment now will not be taken by the House as indicating any abandonment of the position I have taken up on the question, and that it will not be supposed that the House of Commons has come to a decision in favour of terminals, when, on the contrary, there is a great disposition to vote against them—a disposition of which we do not avail ourselves because we prefer to let the Committee have a free hand in dealing with the question.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY (RATES AND CHARGES) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL—(*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*(6.33.) MR. BARCLAY: I wish to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether petitioners will be heard individually by the Committee, or whether they will have to appear by counsel?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: In the ordinary way.

*MR. BARCLAY: Why should not a petitioner be entitled to state his own case? An individual trader would have to incur enormous expense if he appeared by counsel.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Petitioners will have precisely the same right as they have before an ordinary private Committee of this House.

*(6.34.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): This is an important matter. Will the right hon.

Gentleman state whether individual traders will be able to state their case before the Committee or not?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman has ever sat on a Private Bill Committee, but the same course will be pursued before this Committee as before an ordinary Private Bill Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read second time, and committed.

RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS.

Ordered, That all Bills of the present Session to confirm Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under "The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888," containing the Classification of Merchandise Traffic, and the Schedule of Maximum Rates and Charges applicable thereto, be referred to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords to communicate this Resolution and desire their concurrence.—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

QUESTIONS.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK (London University): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he proposes to do anything, and, if so, what, to carry out the recommendations of the Select Committee on Forestry?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): The Select Committee on Forestry made two recommendations: (a) The creation of a Board of Forestry; (b) the establishment of a School of Forestry in more than one centre. But the powers of the Board of Agriculture under the Act which created that Department are strictly limited as follows:—The Board may undertake (1) the preparation of statistics and making of inquiries relating to Forestry. (2) The inspection of schools in which technical instruction is given in connection with Forestry. (3) The aiding of any such school and of any system of lectures or instruction connected with Forestry. The Board has, therefore, no means of giving effect directly to the recommendations. But we are doing what we can within our powers by (1) making further statistical inquiry than has yet been made into the extent of woods and plantations, distinguishing the younger from the older woods; (2) by inspecting and aiding by a grant the lectures given in the University of Edinburgh under the sanction of the Royal Scottish Arboricultural Society. We have also undertaken under certain conditions to make grants towards the Chair of Agriculture and Forestry, about to be established in the Durham College of Science; and we are now in correspondence with the Surveyor's Institution, with a view to the official recognition and of the examinations in Forestry conducted by that Institution. I should be very glad to promote the development of education in Forestry as far as possible, and I think that within the powers of the Board of Agriculture we are doing all that can be done in that direction.

INDEX TO POPULATION TABLES.

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board why there was no "Index to the Population Tables" compiled for the Census of 1881, similar to that for 1871, as comprised in Parliamentary Return [C. 676 II.]; and whether in view of the great utility of such an Index to all persons having occasion to consult the Population Tables, he will give instructions that such an Index shall be prepared on the lines of such Return for the approaching Census?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have made inquiry on the subject, and the Index referred to was, I am informed, omitted on the ground of time and cost. I agree as to the great utility of a full Index, and I will arrange that such an Index shall be prepared in connection with the next Census Returns.

LAMBETH CHARITIES.

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith whether the Charity Commissioners have yet received a Report from the accountant who was to inquire into matters connected with the Lambeth Charities; and, if so, whether the Local Authorities and others interested in the Charities can have a copy of the Report?

Mr. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The Charity Commissioners have, within the last few days, received the Report to which the question refers. They propose to communicate it in the usual course to the Trustees and to the executors of the late assistant overseer, at the cost of whose estate the inquiry has been conducted. The Commissioners will await the receipt of observations upon the Report in the result of this communication before taking further action in the matter. There is no reason to believe that the dealings with the charity funds reported on by the accountant will result in any ultimate loss to the charities.

ACHILL ISLAND.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): In the absence of my hon. Friend (Mr. Deasy), I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the Government engineers have approved of the making of certain projected roads, and the completion and construction of piers in Achill Island; and why the works have not been commenced? I beg also to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether his attention has been called to the distress alleged to exist in Achill; that many of the inhabitants are on the brink of starvation; whether he is aware that only a small proportion of the Islanders have had relief work given them, these being obliged, in numerous instances, to travel very long distances to and from work; that the supply of seed potatoes has run short; that many of them have been found to be rotten, and that in many cases the good ones have been consumed for food; and whether any steps will be taken to remedy the alleged faults in relief of distress in Achill?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): With regard to these two questions, I beg to refer the hon. Member to my reply of yesterday to a similar question put by the hon. Gentleman the Member for Darlington.

Dr. TANNER: What piers are being made in connection with the Island of Achill?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: None.

Dr. TANNER: None! The people are to be allowed to starve and die.

FIAR'S COURT.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that a recent Fiar's Court for Wigtownshire fixed the supposed price for Bere (or Bear) for crop and year 1890, although this variety of barley has for a considerable period ceased to be grown in the county; whether it is lawful for the Fiar's Court to fix a price for Bere where no Bere is grown in the county; and whether the parish minister is entitled to claim the price of barley instead?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Bute): It is the case that a Court for Wigtownshire struck a price for Bere for the crop 1890, thus following the practice in that county for many years, with the exception of the year 1889. I am informed that the quantity of Bere grown in this county is very small, but that it is not known to have altogether ceased. The question of whether or not to include a product in the Fiar's prices appears to be one for the Jury, who return their verdict on the evidence or their own proper knowledge. If Bere is an inferior quality of barley, the minister would, I think, be entitled to claim the highest Fiars prices for that article.

AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

Mr. CHARLES ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will consider the claims of those Inland Revenue officers who are employed in such extra departmental duties as the collection of agricultural statistics for the Board of Trade to some remuneration for their services, in addition to their salaries received for their services in the Department in which they are regularly employed?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): From the 1st of September last an increase in the scale of salaries was granted to the Excise Service, involving an additional annual cost of over £30,000, and on maximum salaries such cost would amount to something like £50,000.

Prior to this a sum of about £11,000 was annually paid for the work connected with the agricultural statistics; but when suggesting the grant of the new scale the Board of Inland Revenue recommended that this amount should no longer be paid to the officers, and that no extra remuneration whatever (except expenses out of pocket) should be granted to them for the Agricultural Returns work, which was to be regarded as forming part of their ordinary duties. In some cases no doubt the change will, in the first year or two, involve a relatively small loss to some officers, but such loss can bear no comparison with the gain, for the new scale gives larger increments and improved prospects. The increase in salaries, moreover, counts towards superannuation, whereas the awards for Agricultural Returns work did not. It must also be borne in mind that, in as far as it can be shown that the collection of Returns caused an increase of expense in travelling or for subsistence during prolonged absence from home, it will be met by a corresponding increase of payment on these accounts, whereas formerly the increased cost was paid by the officer out of his award. The Government regret that after the position of the Excise officers has been so generously dealt with a leaflet, such as probably prompted the present question, has been issued by members of the Service.

COLLOONEY AND CLAREMORRIS RAILWAY.

Dr. TANNER (in the absence of Mr. Sexton): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the employment of unskilled labour on that part of the Collooney and Claremorris Railway, in the Swynford Union, is about to cease; and what further provision the Government intend to make with a view to provide work for the destitute in this the most congested district in Ireland?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: On some parts of the line of the railway mentioned, the earthworks are being gradually completed. On other parts, however, of it there is still a good deal to be done, and arrangements are in progress for concentrating the labour at these points. In this way it is hoped that considerable employment will be given for another month or so. Should the necessity arise, it is proposed to start other relief works in the district.

Dr. TANNER: May I call the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that he has in no way answered the first paragraph of the question, which is, whether the employment of unskilled labour is about to cease?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I answered the question quite fully.

Dr. TANNER: I really regret to have to meet these impertinent answers———

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

DUBLIN POST OFFICE.

Dr. TANNER (in the absence of Mr. Sexton): I beg to ask the Postmaster General on what grounds is payment in full for Sunday duty in the Dublin Post Office withheld from hall porters, bag officers, yard officers, postmen, and labourers, and only paid to sorters; if it is the fact that a Treasury Minute was issued last July, 1890, for payment in full for all grades performing Sunday duty; and will he have an order made to the Dublin authorities to likewise pay the officers referred to above, the same as has been granted to sorters dating from last July?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, Cambridge University): In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that by Treasury Minute of July last, payment for Sunday duty was authorised in the case of sorting clerks and telegraphists. No such authority has been granted as regards other classes of Post Office servants, whose case is now under consideration.

AUSTRALIAN MAILS—MISCARRIAGE OF LETTERS.

Mr. MATHER (Lancashire, S.E., Gorton): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that much dissatisfaction is felt, both in Melbourne (Australia) and this country, at the frequent miscarriage of letters to and fro; whether complaints have been made to him from time to time on the subject; and whether he can assure the House that measures are being taken to ensure the regular and safe despatch and delivery of letters in the future?

*MR. RAIKES: Beyond the occasional isolated cases of loss or delay which necessarily occur when a large mass of correspondence has to be dealt with, I have received no complaints of the miscarriage of letters between this country and Melbourne. But if the hon. Member will furnish me with particulars I will cause inquiry to be made.

ALLEGED DISTURBANCES NEAR VAN.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give any information regarding the serious disturbances which are reported by telegraph to have occurred quite recently near Van, and the attack which is said to have been made upon the British Consulate in that city?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): No information has been received of these reports.

MR. BRYCE: Have the Foreign Office made any inquiry?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: As I have already explained to the House, while a newspaper correspondent telegraphs home news of this kind, Her Majesty's Representative will, in ordinary course, inquire into the facts, but does not telegraph the occurrence unless immediate action is required. If anything extraordinary occurs we shall hear of it in due course.

MR. BRYCE: But the right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question. Are not the Foreign Office in the habit, when reports of this kind are made, of inquiring whether our Representative has received information?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: No, Sir; when sensational telegrams appear we do not necessarily make inquiry.

THE LATE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will ascertain from the Coroner for Westminster, and state whether the name "Francis Charles Hastings Russell" was or was not used in administering the oath to the jury at the inquest upon the late Duke of Bedford; and, if not, what name or names were used?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I can add nothing to the answer which I gave last night, and which is perfectly clear and explicit—that the jury were sworn to the full name and title of the deceased person.

MR. COBB: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the name I gave yesterday was not what was commonly called the full name?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am afraid the hon. Gentleman is a much greater master of English than I am. I cannot conceive that the full name "Francis Charles Hastings Russell" can mean anything but "Francis Charles Hastings Russell."

MR. COBB: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that that is not the name of the deceased?

MR. MATTHEWS: That is a totally different question, which the hon. Member has not yet put to me.

SUPPLY OF SEED POTATOES.

DR. TANNER (in the absence of Sir THOMAS ESMONDE): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether complaints have reached him that the sacks in which the supply of seed potatoes, which are to be sold at 1s. a stone, sent to Ballinore were found to contain a considerable quantity of clay, and that many of the potatoes were utterly unfit for seed; and, whether, in view of the poverty of the district, and the absolute necessity of the potato crop being sown this month, the Government will take immediate steps to ensure that a sufficient supply of sound potato seed is supplied to the people, and at a price they can afford to pay?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The district named cannot be identified.

THE CLARE GRAND JURY.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the resolution forwarded to him by the Grand Jury of the County Clare, strongly recommending the making and maintenance of a light railway between Ennis and Scariff, has been received, and whether any steps will be taken to carry out the recommendation?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The resolution referred to has not been received. I may, however, say that, having regard to the large sum of money already provided by Parliament for the construction of railways in Ireland, I do not consider this a case in which Government could ask for a special grant from Parliament.

KANTURK UNION.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any, and, if so, what relief works are intended to be instituted in the Kanturk Union for the relief of labourers in the district?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The condition of Kanturk Union is receiving careful attention. It has not so far been found necessary to open relief works there.

DR. TANNER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the gentlemen who are under the Poor Law Board have made repeated visits and reported unfavourably upon the condition of the labourers in this district?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have said the condition of the Union is receiving attention.

DR. TANNER: If it is clearly shown that the people are in a very bad condition—starving condition—will something be done?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR; If relief works are necessary they will be started.

ARMY AGENTS.

Mr. HANBURY (Preston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what alterations have recently been made in the system of payment by the War Office to Army agents, and what are the precise duties which Army agents will in future perform for the War Office, and on what terms their remuneration is to be fixed?

THE FINANCIAL SECRETAY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The alterations which will take effect from the 1st of January next are that the firms now acting as Army agents will issue the pay of officers without any charge upon the public for their commission. Messrs. Cox pay the regiments of Guards and distribute the estates of deceased soldiers. These duties it is proposed, for the public convenience, to leave in their hands. The remuneration has not yet been fixed, but it will probably amount to about £1,800 a year, as against £21,000 paid to the agents for their present services.

PROJECTED FORTH AND CLYDE SHIP CANAL.

MR. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the project of a ship canal, connecting the Forth and Clyde, as proposed by Mr. Charles John Wilson, of Hawick, at the meeting of the Associated Chambers of Commerce; whether he has seen the Report of Messrs. Crouch and Hogg, of Glasgow, on a direct route from Yoker to Grangemouth, through a rich mineral district; and whether the Board of Trade can give any facilities for testing the practicability of the scheme, its probable cost, the prospects of traffic, and the likelihood of its commercial success?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I have seen the pamphlet to which the hon. Member refers, but I do not know what facilities could be afforded by the Government which are not at the disposal of those who are interested in such a scheme.

SCOTTISH FISHERY BOARD.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it is intended to give effect this year to the oft-repeated assurances made to the officers of the Scottish Fishery Board that some increase would be made to their salaries in view of the greatly increased duties which have been laid upon them of recent years?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The Secretary for Scotland has been in communication with the Scottish Fishery Board on the question of the salaries of the fishery officers. The final letter from the Board was received on the 26th February last, and the Secretary for Scotland is now in a position to lay his proposals before the Treasury.

ON-LICENCES.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what is the information in his possession on which he bases his statement in the Return on On-Licences, "that in many cases, for which the Magistrates' clerks are not responsible, the registers do not contain accurate records as to the ownership of licensed houses;" who are the persons who are responsible for the alleged defects in the existing registers; and whether he will take such steps as may be necessary to secure that in future the registers shall be properly kept?

MR. MATTHEWS: The headnote was prefixed to the Return in consequence of my having reason to believe that the provisions of Section 36 of the Licensing Acts, 1874, are not strictly observed. It often happens that changes of ownership, after a licence is first granted, are not stated either by the applicants for renewal or by the new owners, and that the name of a person who has ceased to be the owner continues on the register. I propose to issue a circular to the Licensing Justices calling their attention to the matter.

MR. SUMMERS: The Act of 1872?

MR. MATTHEWS: I think it is 1874.

MRS. MARY CATHCART.

DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the seizure of Mrs. Mary Cathcart, of Wootton Hall, Stafford; if he will disclose the name of the Magistrate who with Drs. Bond and Savage are alleged to have signed a certificate for her confinement in a private lunatic asylum; if he will state when and where the doctors examined Mrs. Cathcart; and if he will call upon the Lunacy Commissions to disclose the name of the person or persons by whose authority they made such examination and signed such certificate?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Lunacy Commissioners that no Magistrate signed a certificate in this case; but Mr. Pennington, a Justice for London, appointed under the Lunacy Act, 1890, made an order on February 28 for the confinement in the Priory, a private asylum, upon certificates signed by Drs. Bond and Savage, who examined the lady at the asylum on the 25th inst., by authority of her husband, under whose urgency order she had been taken there on the 24th inst.

DISTRESS IN IRELAND.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what relief works have been started in the famine-stricken district of South Castlehaven and Toehead; how many people have been employed, and what sum of money has been disbursed in such relief; and how much of this money is being paid to relief agents, and how much to the people requiring relief?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Relief works, consisting of road making, have been proceeding in the district mentioned since 10th February last. Between that date and 28th February the daily average number of persons employed on those works was 72. The amount paid in wages was £68 1s. 11d. On 28th February the number of persons employed had increased to 94.

DR. TANNER: Can the Chief Secretary say how much of this money has been paid to relief agents, and how much to the persons requiring relief?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am peculiarly unfortunate this evening in my endeavour to make myself understood by the hon. Gentleman. I believe all this money has been given to persons to whom it is intended relief should be given.

DR. TANNER: How soon can I get an answer?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

DR. TANNER: I will put it down for Monday.

RELIEF IN THE TUAM UNION.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland when the works under the Relief of Distress (Ireland) Act will be commenced in the Tuam Union, and if he can now name the works to be executed, or else the parishes or districts in which they will be undertaken?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: To correct some possible misunderstanding on the part of the hon. and gallant Member, I would point out that there is no Statute such as that mentioned in the question.

Works will very shortly be commenced in the Tuam Union. They will serve the Electoral Divisions of Dunmore, Addergoole, Milltown, Kiltenan, Foxhall, Kilshanny, Belclare, and part of Clare-Tuam.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON VACCINATION.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what steps have been taken for selecting and nominating a member of the Royal Commission on Vaccination in the place of Mr. Bradlaugh; and whether, having regard to the importance of securing throughout the inquiry, so far as may be, an adequate representation of those out of whose complaint the Commission has arisen, he will advise the immediate nomination of a suitable person to fill the vacancy holding the general opinions on the question held by the late Mr. Bradlaugh?

*MR. RITCHIE: I do not know what opinions Mr. Bradlaugh held on the subject of vaccination at the time of his death, but I had confidence in his independence and judgment, and felt he might be relied upon to give full weight to the evidence produced before the Commission. I have been in communication with more than one gentleman recently with a view to filling the vacancy caused by Mr. Bradlaugh's death, but am not yet in a position to make any announcement to the House on the subject.

*MR. CHANNING: The right hon. Gentleman is aware that Mr. Bradlaugh was accepted as a representative of those who are opposed to compulsory vaccination?

*MR. RITCHIE: Yes; I am aware it was the case, and I feel that in selecting some one in his place I am bound to give weight to that consideration.

SALE OF STAMPS IN PUBLIC HOUSES.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that in neighbourhoods where the post offices are closed at or about 8 o'clock in the evening many licensed victuallers are in the habit of obliging their customers by selling them postage stamps; and whether the licensed victuallers are liable to a penalty for selling postage stamps to their customers after the post offices are closed, or, in cases where there is no post offices in the immediate neighbourhood, at any time during the day?

MR. JACKSON: My right hon. Friend the Postmaster General has asked me to answer this question. He is not aware of the practice to which the hon. Member refers. No one is entitled to sell stamps without first taking out a licence.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (CORRUPT AND ILLEGAL PRACTICES) ACT, 1884.

MR. HOWARD (Middlesex, Tottenham): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether he will consider the desirability of introducing a Bill to extend "The Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act, 1884," so as to make its provisions applicable to elections of Vestry Clerks and other parochial officials who are elected by open Parochial Vestry or poll of a parish?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I am not prepared to introduce such a Bill. As far as my information goes, there is no demand for it. In the event of a District Councils Bill being introduced, the matter will necessarily receive consideration.

THE AMERICAN COPYRIGHT ACT.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Copyright Bill has actually passed the Congress of the United States, and whether it contains the provision that American copyright shall only be granted to books deposited before publication with the Librarian of Congress, printed from type set within the limits of the United States, or from plates made therefrom, and that, during the existence of such copyright, the importation of any such book or edition thereof not made from type set within the limits of the United States is prohibited; and, in such case, bearing in mind the renewed declaration of the Prime Minister on 4th March to the Associated Chambers of Commerce, that English remonstrance on foreign commercial policy prejudicial to British trade at home and abroad is wholly futile under the present fiscal system, as we have no means of supporting the remonstrance, or giving any advantage in return for favourable concessions—what definite domestic action, as distinguished from remonstrance, with a foreign Power Her Majesty's Government proposes to take to prevent injury being done to industry and labour in the United Kingdom, and the probable disemployment of many workpeople concerned in the book trade, to restrain the transfer to America of the productions of the works of British authors desirous of securing American copyright by the use in the United States of American type or plates, and simultaneously enjoying copyright in Great Britain and Ireland?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): We have no official knowledge of the measure, and only know from the newspapers that it has been passed. It is quite impossible for me to express any opinion respecting its provisions until we see them. I do not know what changes may have been made in the Bill during its passage through Congress, and I am, therefore, quite unable to indicate what would be the policy or action of the Government with respect to it.

TOWN HOLDINGS COMMITTEE.

MR. CHANNING: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Motion will be made for the re-appointment of the Select Committee on Town Holdings?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope to put a notice as to the re-appointment of the Town Holdings Committee on the Paper within the next few days.

ROYAL COMMISSION ON LABOUR.

MR. SUMMERS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that out of 1,084,361 persons employed in mills and factories in the United Kingdom as many as 656,549 are females, the Government will consider the advisability of appointing one or more women members of the Royal Commission on Labour?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have no knowledge as to the accuracy of the figures the hon. Gentleman quotes in his question, but I have to say the Government will carefully consider all suggestions that may be made to them as to the constitution of the Royal Commission on Labour.

MR. SUMMERS: The figures, I may mention, are to be found in the Blue Book.

MIDDLESEX MAGISTRATES.

MR. HOWARD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the jurisdiction at Quarter Sessions of the existing Middlesex Magistrates is reserved to them by "The Local Government Act, 1888," as fully as if resident in that county, though they may be residing actually in the county of London?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am advised that Middlesex Justices are not disqualified from acting as Justices in that county merely by the fact that they reside not in Middlesex, but in the county of London. If any reasonable legal doubt exists on the point, the matter can be tested in the Courts of Law.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-on-Tyne): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what business he proposes to take on Monday and next week?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I think we shall begin with the Irish Supplementary Vote on Monday. I hope we may get the Navy Supplementary Votes to-night, but if not we shall proceed with them on Monday following with the Irish Supplementary Vote—or, as my right hon. Friend suggests, if the Navy Votes take any considerable time, it might be well to postpone the Irish Vote until Thursday. But Supply-Supplementary Votes will be the business next week.

MR. J. MORLEY: The right hon. Gentleman will permit me to remind him that there was rather an understanding that due notice should be given as to when the Irish Vote was intended to be taken; many Irish Members are interested.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Well, we will say definitely that Irish Supplementary Estimates will be taken on Thursday.

RELIEF OF DISTRESS (IRELAND), 1891.

Copy ordered—

"Of Return of Particulars of Relief Works opened in certain portions of Ireland up to the 28th day of February, 1891."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 132.]

FAILURE OF THE POTATO CROP.

Copy ordered—

"Of Report on the Failure of the Potato Crop and the condition of the Poorer Classes in the West of Ireland."—(*Mr Arthur Balfour.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 133.]

POTATO CROP, 1890 (IRELAND AND GREAT BRITAIN).

Copy ordered—

"Of Extracts from Reports upon the Potato Crop, 1890, made for the Irish Land Commission, in certain Unions of the Counties of Clare, Cork, Donegal, Galway, Kerry, Leitrim, Limerick, Mayo, Sligo, Waterford, and Wexford, by Messrs. Cunningham, Dillon, Doran, Eyre, Headech, Porter, and Roberts, Assistant Commissioners, with a Report upon the Potato Crop of Great Britain in 1890, and also upon the Supply and Distribution of Seed, with Suggestions."—(*Mr. Arthur Balfour.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 134.]

STANDING COMMITTEES (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN reported from the Chairmen's Panel: That they had appointed Mr. Osborne Morgan to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures.

Report to lie upon the Table.

HARES PRESERVATION BILL [LORDS].

Bill read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 241.]

Mr. J. Morley

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

(7.5.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): This I think is an opportune time to ask the House to consider the present system of administration and legislation for the different parts of the Empire, and to consider, not in a Party spirit, a possible solution of the problem of devolution. I think the subject ought to be considered and might be considered outside the spirit of Party, and in that view I find the leaders of different Parties agree. The noble Lord the leader of the Tory Party especially I may mention. He, in his speech at Newport five years ago, claimed that it had always been the contention of the Tory Party that people in their own localities should govern themselves, and that they should be encouraged to take an active interest in the administration of their own affairs. He pointed out that there might be weaknesses in the Local Authorities, but the wisdom of a large Central Authority would correct the failures and mistakes of each. It was the sort of speech we might expect from an advocate of federalism. Three years ago the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (Lord Hartington) spoke upon the subject, and said that in addition to County Boards perhaps some larger authorities—perhaps National Local Authorities—should be erected for England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) proposed a scheme at the same time very much on the same lines. I think under these circumstances, since all parties in the House have expressed themselves more or less favourably towards the principle of Home Rule, we might be able to consider the question on its merits and quite apart from Party feeling. I will try to do so, and more from the standpoint of Scotland and Ireland, because there it may be said to be a burning question, and the people are not satisfied with things as they are. There may be satisfaction in England or not, but here it depends upon the English representatives themselves. Out of some 670 members there are only about 200 representatives from outside England, so that England has more than two-thirds of the entire representation in the House, and any particular question can be determined by English Members. That there is discontent in Ireland I suppose everyone will admit. You have Ireland governed and administered from Dublin Castle, and the great bulk of the people of Ireland detest Dublin Castle rule. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham at the time when he proposed his scheme of Home Rule all round talked of the administration of Dublin Castle as similar to the rule of the Austrians in Italy, or the Russians in Poland; but I will not go so far as that, I will content myself with saying that the great bulk of the Irish people detest the kind of administration they get from Dublin Castle. In Scotland we are, perhaps, the most democratic nation in Europe. Thanks to John Knox we have had national education for centuries, and our Presbyterian form of religion tends to democracy, yet in this democratic country we are governed by Boards continually, and by the irresponsibility of Parliament House. Now, I think the Scottish people are tired of Parliament House and this administration by Boards. I hope, from what I have heard from the First Lord of the Treasury, that we shall be saved from the crowning indignity of not only having our administration conducted by these Boards, but our Local Legislation proceeding from them also. There is not much feeling in favour of Parliament House, it has ceased to be popular—from being Presbyterian it has become Episcopalian; it used to be Liberal, it has now become Unionist and Tory. I think the Scottish people are no more in favour of Parliament House administration than the Irish people are in favour of the rule of Dublin Castle. The discontent in Ireland is of old standing, but the Scottish discontent is a thing of yesterday. There has been discontent for the last 20 years to my knowledge, and a disposition towards Home Rule for the purpose of compelling the Imperial Parliament to consider Scottish matters, and seeing that time is given for proper attention to Scottish business. There was a time when Scottish Members thought if they had a Secretary for Scotland to take charge of Scottish business, as the Home Secretary has charge of English internal matters, and the Irish Secretary of Irish affairs, they might have more attention paid to the claims of Scotland. The agitation was then for a Secretary of State for Scotland, and now that we have such a Minister, and after experience of some four or five—some in the Cabinet and some outside, some in this House and some in the House of Lords—we find that things are just as bad as when we had to depend upon the Lord Advocate; and those who thought they would be content with that small reform are now compelled by the facts of the case to go much further in the direction of Home Rule. Both in Scotland and Ireland legislation is very much in sympathy with administration. The voice of Scotland and Ireland as expressed by the great bulk of the people is not considered by the Government in this House, and not considered by the great English majority by whose assistance measures are thrust upon Scotland and Ireland against the public opinion in those countries. So you have a condition of affairs that should make even right hon. Gentlemen opposite reconsider their position. With a democracy the only sound basis of law and administration is the will of the people, but where you have laws passed and administered contrary to the desires of the people, there you have a condition of things tending either to the development of anarchy, or returning to an autocratic form of Government. It is a condition of affairs utterly incompatible with democracy. But apart from any questions of this kind, in this House you have a state of congestion in public business, and we are unable to carry through the business we take upon ourselves. It is physically impossible, without sitting all the year round, for Members to find an opportunity to invite the attention of the House to subjects of the deepest interest to their constituents. Out of 200 or more notices of Private Members at the beginning of the Session some dozen find an opportunity for Second Readings on Wednesdays, and these are determined, not by their relative importance, but by the accident of the ballot, and some of the important matters are never submitted for consideration. For nine years my hon. Friend has attempted to secure some sort of right of way to the health resorts of our country, our mountains, and moors. These mountains and moors during the last 15 years have become more precious in the eyes of proprietors than arable land; they would prefer to have their crops destroyed rather than have their game disturbed. It is eight or nine years since we have tried to get a decision upon a Permissive Bill for Scotland. I do not wish to multiply illustrations; I only wish to indicate the difficulties. Irish Members have the habit of urging their claims with a persistency that has hitherto secured them an advantage as between Scotland and Ireland, and altogether the state of affairs is such that Members of all Parties are coming round to the opinion that there must be some system of devolution of business into the hands of people who know how to carry it out. We are trying Grand Committees, and there are some who are prepared to go further and establish National Committees; but I think we are practically all agreed there should be some system of devolution of business. On this side we are prepared to support a measure of Home Rule for Ireland, and I am in favour of the proposal. But the question is, what kind of Home Rule is to be given? and this is a question that right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench should consider, and then say something that will shed a little more light on their proposals. We have had a Bill before us, but this the country has rejected. We hear of a modified proposal, but I think we ought to know more about it, and how the difficulties are proposed to be met. I do not think any measure for Ireland will be considered, unless those responsible for the preparation make everything clear. This *vis inertiæ* will never carry through any system of devolution. Upon this question of Home Rule for Ireland I think that the country has determined that, so far as it may be granted, it will not be on the lines of the 24th clause of the Home Rule Bill; that whatever may be done, Irish Members, or a portion of them, will require to remain here to take part in Imperial work. If that is the case—if they have the control of their own domestic affairs—the question naturally arises, shall they have a voice in the control of ours? If so, then probably, being a Celtic race, they will keep together and sell their vote to either side for what they can get for it; and I think nobody can object, under the circumstances, to their doing anything of the kind. We may be able to modify this; but, so far, I have not yet heard from either side any scheme that would not be anomalous. But we are not anxious about anomalies. If an anomaly is of old standing and works well, we keep it in existence; but I do not think we can create new ones. Even Conservatives will not go so far as that, although they support old anomalies. Some hon. Gentlemen say they are not prepared to put the Constitution into the melting pot; but it seems to me we are doing that; we are melting down this old Parliament and re-casting it; and the only question is, what form are we going to give to the new castings? You must see that they are suitable to the State machinery. We are told that Scotland ought not to stand in the way; that we ought to do all we can to get the Bill passed for Ireland granting Irish Home Rule; and that then it will be far easier, for the first step will be taken, to give Home Rule to Scotland. But I think it would be much easier to give Home Rule all round than to proceed by different Bills for one fraction after another. The difficulties you have to meet are such that they may be more readily met by devolving local privileges to each section of the country. So far as Scotland is concerned the difficulties are greater to English Members, for they do not understand our laws and our administration. In England and Wales you have English laws and English modes of administration; in Scotland we retain our old laws, our old methods of administration, and our old terminology is much more foreign to Englishmen than is the case of Wales or Ireland. They cannot understand these things, so they run away and only return when the Whip calls them to vote against our desires. Now the question is, are we to have a form of Federal Home Rule or of Colonial Home Rule? Shall the tendency be towards federation rather than dualism, and will Ireland accept it? So far as I understand the conditions laid down Ireland would accept it. Ireland wants the control of her own domestic affairs, and I think she can get that as well under the Federal tie as under the dual system. Leading Irishmen, too, have been in favour of federalism as against the dual system. The father of the popular movement, Daniel O'Connell, began as a repealer, and fought the battle of repeal for many long years, but he died a Federalist. In one of the last letters of his published correspondence, and dated October 12, 1844, he balanced the advantages of repeal and federation. He wrote—

> "Simple repealers are of opinion that a reconstituted Irish Parliament should have precisely the same power and authority as the former Irish Parliament had. Federalists, on the contrary, appear to me to require more for Ireland than simple repealers do, for besides a local Parliament having full practical local authority, Federalists require that for the consideration of Imperial questions, colonial, military, and naval questions, and the lines of foreign policy in a Federal Parliament, Ireland should have a fair share of representative power. It is but right and just to confess that in that respect Federalists would give Ireland more weight and importance in Imperial concerns than would be acquired by a policy of simple repeal. For my own part I own"—

and this is from the father of the Repeal movement—

> "that since I have come to contemplate the specific differences, such as they are, between simple repeal and Federalism, I do at present feel a preference for the Federal plan, as tending more to the utility of the Irish connection with England than simple repeal."

O'Connell, then, was a Federalist. Isaac Butt, who succeeded him, was a Federalist, and the living leaders are Federalists. Mr. Parnell is a Federalist, or else he got £10,000 from Mr. Rhodes under false pretences.

*Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Dr. CLARK: Mr. Davitt is undoubtedly a Federalist. This is a question that depends as much upon Irish opinion in America as upon Irish opinion at home. I think that all the active members of the Irish Party, all the prominent leaders in America, are quite satisfied that Federalism is the proper solution of the Irish difficulty. In the States recently I saw some of the extreme men, and I have known some of them for the last 20 years. I met them during the Fenian times, and among those of the extreme men I met in America last year, and who have been Fenians, there was not one who would not be content with a Federal system for Ireland, that country having the management of her own affairs in a manner similar to that enjoyed by each State under the American Union. I take it, then, that a form of Federal devolution would be acceptable to Ireland, while the Imperial Parliament would be relieved to give attention to important Imperial concerns. Undoubtedly any Government that takes this question in hand will meet with strong support from Irishmen. There will be a strong Irish agitation in the next Parliament, and if there are fewer Home Rule Members returned for Ireland there will be more Scotch Home Rule Members. We can get rid of agitation if we proceed to dispassionately consider a system of devolution. I have put my Resolution in a somewhat vague form advisedly. It may be that the Welsh people do not require what the Scotch and Irish people require. Scotland and Ireland have had Parliaments in the past, but the Welsh difficulty may be solved by means of a Grand Committee. There are some English Members who think that the Imperial Parliament should remain as at present, and that Scotch and Irish Members should devote themselves to local matters in their own countries, while English Members occupy the first part of the

Session here with English matters, all subsequently meeting for Imperial work. I have no objection to such a system being tried, but I think the only method of meeting our difficulties is to devolve a portion of our work upon National Assemblies, Parliaments, or Councils, such as the States of America have, or as different parts of the Canadian Dominion have, with an Imperial Parliament for Imperial purposes only. I think we are coming to that. Any other system may be tried, but the only system that will give us what we want—time to consider our domestic affairs, and the time we ought to give to Imperial matters—will be by devolving these powers upon National Assemblies. We have three-quarters of the population of the globe, more or less, under Imperial control, and a quarter of the whole territory. Within the Empire young nationalities are growing up, and we have to consider how we may bind all these together with a Federal tie in a really Imperial Parliament, where all parts of the Empire shall have representation. We have not got that now. I think right hon. Gentlemen on the other side should carefully weigh what is taking place in Canada and Australia. In Canada you have a Party in some of the Provinces actually agitating for secession, for separation from the Empire, in order to be united to the great American Republic. There is a strong agitation going on in Nova Scotia in favour of union with the United States, and throughout Canada there is a Party asking for a fiscal tie with the United States. Such a tie would soon be followed by another and still closer tie. It has been said that Canada must either have representation in Westminster or in Washington. You have representatives sitting in Australia for the purpose of discussing the binding together of the various colonies in an Australian Dominion with an Army, a Navy, and a Supreme Court, and they are considering whether they will permit the Privy Council to be a final Court of Appeal. In Canada the Queen has more subjects than in Ireland, and more in Australia than in Scotland, and those rising nationalities have a much greater future than either Scotland or Ireland possibly can have. I think the Party opposite, who are doing nothing to solve this problem, are the real separationists, and may bring about the separation of the various portions of the British Empire. The first step necessary to prevent this is for the House to devolve its purely local affairs, and be an Imperial Parliament in reality. How supremely ridiculous it is that this Imperial Parliament should have to decide whether Belfast shall have a main drain, or a monument shall be erected in a certain street in Dublin, or Edinburgh shall have an hotel at the Railway Station, or Glasgow shall have a special bridge or dock! The remedy of federation has been a success wherever it has been tried. Canada has tried it for nearly a score of years; America for a century, and Switzerland for 500 years, whilst Germany has given it a trial and it has been successful. The hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) is going about objecting to any right of veto to the Imperial Parliament, but, in my opinion, that is one of the best things possible. The Supreme Court has been one of the evils of the Federal system, as it has occasionally declared some Act which has been in force for some time in a particular State to be contrary to the Constitution. The only Supreme Court in our case would be Parliament, which would determine whether the Local Bodies had gone beyond their powers I am glad to have had the opportunity of bringing this question again before the House, and giving an opportunity for its discussion. I think opinion is moving in favour of the Federal system, and that it is the only system by which we can keep together this great and mighty Empire, and bring to pass the state of things foreshowed by the Poet Laureate—

> "—the war-drum throbb'd no longer, and the battle flags were furled.
> In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.
> There the common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
> And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law."

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, in order to increase the efficiency of the Imperial Parliament to deal with Imperial affairs and in order to give speedier and fuller effect to the special desires and wants of the respective nationalities constituting the United Kingdom, it is desirable to devolve upon the representatives of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales respectively the management and control of their domestic affairs,"—(*Dr. Clark,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(7.35.) Mr. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): I beg to second the Amendment. My hon. Friend has referred in his speech more particularly to Ireland and Scotland; he has not made many references to Wales, and, indeed he was not very happy in those he has made —thereby it seems to me adding an argument to the many he has used in favour of the principle of the Amendment. The Principality is the smallest of the nationalities mentioned in the Resolution, but I do not think it is the least interesting, and I do not think it is less capable of self-government than England, Scotland, or Ireland. Whatever will tend to increase the efficiency and vigour of Parliament ought to commend itself to every Member of this House. There seems to be a consensus of opinion that the Parliamentary machine is clogged with the arrears of legislation we have to deal with. There are many small questions coming before this House which ought not to come before it all. It is not a dignified thing for an Imperial Parliament to have to trouble itself with small questions similar to those mentioned by my hon. Friend. The second part of the Amendment deals with the principle of devolution. I do not see any danger at all in that principle, and I venture to join my hon. Friend in the appeal he has made that the discussion should not be carried on in a Party spirit, but with the object of seeing what can be done to increase the efficiency of this House by devolving upon the different nationalities the management of their own affairs. There has been a great access of national feeling in Wales during the last few years. I think everyone will admit that the comparatively greater attention paid to Welsh matters in this House is due to the fact that there has been an increase in the strength of the feeling of Welsh nationality. Up to a short time ago it would have been quite unnecessary and superfluous to argue the question that the Welsh had a separate nationality; but the Welsh oracle of the Government, the Postmaster General (Mr. Raikes), said the other night that the Welsh people were not a nation at all, that we had no right to say we had any national feeling, and that we were only a small and obscure population pursuing a pseudo-national chimera. I fear it would not be in accordance with Parliamentary usage to describe the right hon. Gentleman a "malignant censurer," but that is what other traducers of our nation were called in Henry VIII.'s time. I was interested the other day with the Petition of the Welsh people to Henry VIII., in whom the Welsh people took some interest because he had Welsh blood in his veins. They said—

"So that we crave pardon, Sir, if we say it was fit for the honour of your dominions, that some part of it should never be conquered. . . . To your Highness, therefore, we offer all obedience, desiring only that we may be defended against the insults of our malignant censurers. For we are not the offspring of the runaway Britains (as they term us), but natives of a country, which, besides defending itself, received all those who came to us for succour. . . . As for our language, though it seems harsh, it is that yet which was spoken anciently, not only in this island, but in France. Some dialects whereof remain still amongst the Bas-Bretons there, and here in Cornwall. Nor shall it be a disparagement (we hope) that it is spoken so much in the throat, since the Florentine and Spaniard affect this kind of pronounciation, as believing words that sound so deep proceed from the heart. . . . We doubt not, but as in all countries the mountains have afforded as eminent wits and spirits as any other part, so ours, also, by your Highness's good favour and employment may receive that esteem."

That may be said to be somewhat an ancient authority, but there is one authority which may be regarded as the highest by the Postmaster General. Lord Salisbury, the head of Her Majesty's Government, speaking at Carnarvon in 1888, and speaking as the head of Her Majesty's Government, used these very striking words—

"If ever there was a people who were a separate nationality, it is the Welsh. They

> are a people of very ancient extraction, they have their own language. They have up to a certain point a separate history: and yet there is no people, I believe, who are more firmly convinced that their own political, commercial, and industrial, security depends upon their close political union with the larger country by whose side they live."

Although the Postmaster General has a summer house in Wales, I think that on this matter the Prime Minister is a better authority than the Postmaster General; and, therefore, as Wales is one of the nationalities, the question arises whether the claims and interests of the Principality, and her separate desires and aspirations, have been sufficiently attended to by the Imperial Parliament. I should like to call attention to the words used the other day by the greatest authority on all sides of the House as to the way in which the business of the House has been conducted for a great many years past. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, on Tuesday evening, spoke as follows with regard to the Principality:—

> "And, as to Wales, what attention was ever given to any Welsh question or interest in this House by this mass of English Representatives until within the last five or six years?"

He also said—

> "In Welsh, Irish, and Scotch questions—in matters where they are entitled to decide for themselves—the other partners are borne down, overruled, and cast out of the precincts of this House by the enormous preponderance of the English vote."

That is absolutely and strictly true, if I may venture to say so, and we had an illustration of it only a few days ago. I have taken the trouble to analyze the vote on the majority side upon the Motion for Disestablishing the English Church in Wales, and I find—and this will show how Welsh opinion is weighed down by the opinion of English Representatives — that out of 235 Members there were only 2 Welsh Members who voted in that majority; 12 Irish Members were to be found in it, 15 Scotch Members, a good number of them being Unionists, and 206 English Members. If I may be allowed to put it the other way, of the Welsh Members you had only 1 out of 14 voting against the disestablishment of the Church; of the Irish Members you had 1 out of 8, of the Scotch Members you had 1 out of 5, and of English Members you had 1 out of every 2 voting against it. That shows the consideration given to Welsh desires in this House. It is an attention which we would rather not have, which does away with the effect our voices ought to have in Parliament in regard to our domestic legislation. Another circumstance illustrating the neglect of Welsh interests in the House occurred during the last Session, when the Welsh Members, after repeated appeals and great effort, and although the Motion for a Committee was kept standing on the Order Book of the House for weeks, were refused the request that the Financial Relations Committee should inquire whether the Principality was or was not unnecessarily oppressed by an unfair incidence of taxation. This is not the time for discussing that question, but it could easily be proved that Wales is suffering from considerable injustice in this respect. I simply mention the matter to illustrate my point, that we do not have the attention paid to exclusively Welsh affairs in this House that we ought to have. It may be asked by the Government or by our opponents what plan we have for applying and carrying out the principle we advocate. My hon. Friend did not produce a plan. I do not know that it is necessary to lay down a plan in dealing with an abstract principle of this kind. The principle involved is clear enough, and if the House agrees to it, it is for the Government of the day, who have all the necessary materials at hand, to find out a way to deal with the matter. My hon. Friend said that we do not want self-government so much in Wales as they do in Scotland, or as they do in Ireland. But in regard to this matter, it does not seem to me to be necessary to give identical powers to every part of the United Kingdom. So long as Wales has an assembly to govern her own affairs, it will matter very little whether it is called a Parliament, a National Council, or anything else. We are not at all wedded to the Norman name "Parliament." Wales, as far back as the time of Henry VIII., had a National Council of her own, which was abolished in the reign of William and Mary; and I may point out that there is already a kernel for such a Council in the provisions of the Local Government Act recently passed, for by the 81st section of that Act it is provided that the County Councils of several counties may combine together for one purpose. They may so combine, but there is no reason why they should until you increase the powers of the body. There is no reason why that Act might not be so enlarged as to enable the people to deal with their own local affairs to a very extended degree. But what do we propose? There is the matter of Private Bill legislation. The Government have already prepared a plan for dealing locally with Scotch Private Bill legislation; why should they not apply the same principle to Wales? I see there are now 183 Private Bills on the Orders of the House, and 16 of them are Welsh. The proportion of the Welsh Representatives in the House is 1 out of 24; but the number of Welsh Private Bills is 1 out of 12, all of them relating to local matters, which could be much better dealt with, and at much less expense and inconvenience, in Wales than in this House. On inquiry the other day, I ascertained that for one of the public undertakings in South Wales the immense sum of £88,388 0s. 4d. has been spent in getting Acts of Parliament up to December last. Then there is the question of administration, and in this work the English people have not been very happy; they have made many errors, and none greater than in the policy of repressing the Welsh language. By the 27th of Henry VIII., Act 26, after enacting that all Courts should be held, and all evidence given, in the English tongue, it was provided by Section 2:—

> "And also that from henceforth no person or persons that use the Welsh speech or language shall have or enjoy any manner office or fees within this Realm of England, Wales, or other the King's dominion, upon pain of forfeiting the same offices or fees, unless he or they use and exercise the English speech or language."

It may be said that that is an old enactment, but it is now in force, and, moreover, it is the keynote of the administration of affairs by the English Government in Wales. ["No, no!"] Oh! but it is. I did not intend to pursue that matter closely, but I could give instances to prove my contention. By this policy you have destroyed your Church in Wales. You have always appointed English Bishops there until the last few years. You do not do so now, perhaps, because of the strong national feeling that has arisen; but I say that administration in this spirit has practically destroyed the influence of your Church in the Principality. I doubt if there is more than one Lord Lieutenant in any county in Wales who understands the Welsh language. They are all, I am afraid, members of the Tory class, save one, who has become degraded from Liberalism to Liberal Unionism. Nearly all the Justices are English-speaking people, and, speaking broadly, most offices in the Principality are filled in that way. Next as to domestic legislation. There are already instances of separate domestic legislation for Wales in the matters of Sunday closing and intermediate education. But if Wales had had an Assembly of its own it would have settled those questions, including the subject of higher education, much more satisfactorily than at present. The Welsh people are nothing if not educational. They are great lovers of education. There is a strong feeling among the people that there ought to be a degree-conferring University in the Principality, and those especially are matters which the Welsh people wish to settle, and could well settle, for themselves. Again, take the question of burials, and the Act passed through the exertions of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Denbigh (Mr. Osborne Morgan). At present that Act is worthless. We have endeavoured to amend it, but have found it impossible to do so. Without going into details many domestic questions of a local or national character might be dealt with much more satisfactorily by an Assembly of our own than in this Parliament. As to public works, some friends of mine think that important works in the Principality ought not to be decided upon by a local tribunal; but however that may be, I think that many of the public works that are dealt with in Private Bill Committees might be dealt with in the Principality. It may be asked whether Wales is capable of wise self-government. Well, I do not want to flatter the Welsh, but I think Wales is quite as capable of governing itself as the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man, both of which have separate legislative powers. The latter has gone in advance of England by extending the suffrage to women. It is an interesting fact that the oldest code of laws existing in a living language is a code prepared by the Welshman, Howell the Good. These laws were changed at the time of the Union in the reign of Henry VIII. You improved these laws in some particulars, but in others you did not. For instance, under the law of Howell the Good we had no primogeniture. Land in the Principality, according to the old Welsh laws, descended equally upon all the children of the family, and I think it was not an improvement to do away with that law. If you had had the same law in England, and had allowed us to retain ours, we should not be suffering now from the evils of the feudal system. But if we are capable of self-government, are we fit to be entrusted with it? An argument used against giving self-government to Ireland is this: "You are a parcel of people unfit to be entrusted with Government; we are afraid to entrust the interests of the Irish people into the hands of the class who would be in power in Ireland if the Home Rule Bill were carried." Can that be said of Wales? No one can say that the Welsh are a criminal people, or disloyal, or anything of that kind. Mr. Justice Wright, on the North Wales Circuit the other day, said he had gone through three counties and had only had four prisoners to try. Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams, who is going the South Wales Circuit, has had white gloves presented to him in three counties and in two county boroughs.

If we are capable of governing ourselves, then we ought to be entrusted with self-government. Experience shows in all quarters of the globe that the more people are entrusted with responsible self-Government the more they prove equal to the demands made upon them. By granting Home Rule to the Welsh people you would not be weakening the Empire. The Welsh people are proud of belonging to the great British Empire. Our loyalty would not be weakened, but our attachment would be strengthened; and assuredly, the day will be a happy one for the great British Empire when we shall have a domestic Legislature for each of the four Nationalities which constitute the United Kingdom. (8.2.)

*(8.31.) Mr. SOMERVELL (Ayr, &c.): It appears to me that the sting of the Motion now before the House is in its tail. There has been some discussion as to who is responsible for the alteration from its original form, but I think I can trace in it the hand of the hon. Member for Hanley. The Motion says—

> "It is desirable to devolve upon the Representatives of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales respectively the management and control of their domestic affairs."

Well, Sir, since the day our first Mother, with the assistance of the Serpent, got the better of Adam that has been the problem which has puzzled mankind, and if Parliamentary Representatives are only to be elected because they undertake to manage and control their domestic affairs, I fear that not many men will be found to possess the qualification, and that the restriction as to sin will have to be abolished. Passing from the amended and expurgated edition to the original Motion, I find——

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at thirty-five minutes after Eight o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 9th March, 1891.

NEW PEER.

William Walsham Lord Bishop of Wakefield—Was (in the usual manner) introduced.

RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS.

Message from the Commons, that they have come to the following Resolution, namely, that all Bills of the present Session to confirm Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under the "Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888," containing the classification of merchandise traffic, and the schedule of maximum rates and charges applicable thereto, be referred to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons; the said Message to be taken into consideration to-morrow.

TURKEY AND THE EASTERN QUESTION.

ADDRESS FOR PAPERS.

*LORD **STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL**, in rising to call attention to the correspondence in Turkey, and to move an humble Address to Her Majesty for further Papers in connection with the Eastern Question, said: My Lords, a notice of this kind would have come on in August last had it not been for the absence of the noble Marquess who directs the Foreign Office. Something at the time occurred with regard to the appointment of the Bishops in Macedonia which tended to provoke a serious discussion, and it is no matter of astonishment that the noble Marquess, placed and burdened as he is, should sometimes withdraw before the Session terminates. I make no observation upon that point. I know how difficult it is to draw attention to any question of Foreign Policy at present. We have had too much in the United Kingdom to preoccupy and to distract us; but even the incidents of the Divorce Court, or the embarrassments of Ireland, will not avert the march of armies on Constantinople, but, on the contrary, are much more likely to encourage it. They do not either release Great Britain from the obligation of supporting the treaties she has entered into. It is when we are much preoccupied at home that we become more vulnerable in the larger and more general circumference. To take an extreme case, if the country was engaged in Civil War, Parliament no doubt would be rather deaf to Foreign Policy, and yet, under those conditions, Foreign Policy would be fraught with peril and anxiety. Domestic troubles should be rather an incentive,although no doubt they are an anodyne of, vigilance. Although, under the circumstances which I am pointing to, I cannot hope to draw much attention from your Lordships, I will hazard a few words in strict accordance with the notice I have given. There is a volume upon Crete which contains an important despatch from Commander Brenton proving that the disturbances in Crete were pretty well arranged unless aggressive movements in Greece happened to renew them. There is an important volume upon the trial of Moussa Bey, the Kurdish chieftain, which shows that in the East as well as in the West of Europe it is not easy to obtain convictions in spite of evidence to call for them. His acquittal was lamented by the British Embassy and by the Foreign Office. There is a volume on Bulgaria which shows that the position there is still unaltered; that Prince Ferdinand has not received the sanction of the Powers, and that the Sublime Porte has sent out a manifesto to impeach the validity of his position. There is a volume also, presented in this very Session, which is a lively mirror of Armenian disturbances. It concludes, however, with an intimation that at the end of last December they were in a great degree composed. During the last three months there is perfect darkness which might be a sufficient ground for seeking further information. In that volume on Armenia, presented in this Session, there is an interesting Minute from Mr. Clifford Lloyd—at page 82—which will remind anyone who reads it of a well-known passage in Burke, to the effect that "distance always weakens government," and which shows that the Sultan cannot govern in Kurdistan as he might do in Asia Minor. It is curious as showing that the genius of one century may be corroborated by the detailed knowledge of another. As it would be fatiguing, I shall read no extracts to your Lordships. It is more important to advert to the conclusions which the Blue Books may suggest to us. They are I think that Russia is entitled to expostulate as regards the position of Bulgaria—that peace was due to a great extent to moderation and forbearance upon her part. If Russia is ever to move again towards the Balkans, it ought to be when France is seeking her alliance; when Germany, on that account, is little able to restrain her; when Great Britain is anxious about Herat and India, as well as about the Black Sea and the Bosphorus; when a distinguished orator who sought the partnership of Russia, and who proclaimed her benevolence, is active still on the political arena. But what may be the counsels at St. Petersburg is too intricate a question for me, perhaps for anyone, to fathom. It may, however, be worth while to point to two or three expedients or precautions which these documents, in some degree, suggest to us. One is that the mode of nomination for Bulgaria ought to be corrected. The principle of giving a veto to every Power has proved to be impracticable. It ought to be recollected to his credit that at the Congress at Berlin the noble Marquess did his utmost to prevent it. You may see it in the protocols. Another is, that it might be usefully laid down that the ruler of Bulgaria, whether he is destined to be sovereign or vassal, should only be of the Greek or of the Bulgarian religion. As the Blue Books show, Russia is inexorable against Prince Ferdinand on the ground of his connection with the Vatican. The third point which might suggest itself at present is that the Treaty of April 15th, 1856, by which Austria, France, and Great Britain engaged to act together when the Sublime Porte is in danger, might be subjected to some re-construction, by which other Powers should be admitted to partake in it. It might then become what it has not been—a barrier to war, a shelter to the Bosphorus. But I pass by these topics, each of which would in itself suffice to occupy an evening, in order to go on to one which is more practical and urgent; which also tends to a result more easily attainable. I cannot help thinking that the time has come when a judicious effort might be made to revive the Ottoman Assemblies which sat in 1877, which were supported by Sir Henry Layard, as Ambassador, by Sir William Gregory, and Mr. Laurence Oliphant, as travellers, which were suspended by the war, and which have fallen since into comparative oblivion. Ten years ago, upon a Motion exclusively directed to that subject, I went into a statement which is long ago forgotten, but which at present I should venture to repeat, only desiring to add to it an observation suggested by the recent *Life of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe.* Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was well known to your Lordships. Although he was, no doubt, little suited to the Parliamentary arena, as a thinker, a negotiator, a despatch-writer, his merits have been long acknowledged and referred to. To recall his type you would have to go back to the first Earl of Malmesbury in the last century. Now, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, during a long career at Constantinople, was constantly engaged in the attempt to overcome abuses from the Adriatic to the Black Sea, from the Danube to the Tigris and Euphrates in the State to which he was accredited. After the Crimean War, which raised him to a pinnacle almost above the Sultan and his Empire, he did appear to have established various advantages. But still he had imperfectly succeeded. The evidence is copious. You have it in the admirable work of Mr. Nassau Senior, who travelled to Constantinople and the East between the close of the Crimean War and the retirement of the illustrious diplomatist. Mr. Nassau Senior, was admitted to the confidence of the Ambassador, and was not at all inclined to disparage his achievements. But that volume constantly reflects the general misrule, imperfect justice, lawless conduct, and corrupt administration which everywhere met the brilliant, painstaking observer. Now, the point which I wish to bring before the House is this: that what Lord Stratford de Redcliffe failed to do, his successors can hardly be expected to accomplish, because they have not the splendid vantage ground of the Crimean War from which he was enabled to exert himself. No doubt, Lord Dalling, Lord Lyons, Sir Henry Elliot, and others who succeeded Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in that post, were men of eminent ability, but they were not, like

Lord Stratheden and Campbell

him, from early youth acclimatised upon the Bosphorus, and, therefore, could not reach his personal ascendency. Nor is it the least disparagement to say that even Sir William White, who stands above my praise, is far from likely to effect what Lord Stratford de Redcliffe was thus unable to accomplish. I know that the prevalent opinion in Great Britain as to Ottoman abuses runs in an old and rather superannuated channel. Governments are urged and Embassies exhorted to lecture or reform autocracy in the Ottoman Empire, as if political assemblies had never come into existence there. The old agency is constantly invoked in spite of its reiterated and, indeed, intelligible failure. The new one, in spite of the applause it gained during the short time it lasted, is altogether disregarded as if it had no place in history. Articles and speeches are constantly put forward to make autocracy effective and benevolent, but none, or scarcely any, are directed to restore the agency by which improvement is attainable. If all the power of mind so frequently brought to bear on the despotic system of the Ottoman Empire was directed to the establishment of a system for reforming and for balancing it, the end, no doubt, would be attained. But no such effort is apparent. On the contrary, the fig-tree is importuned for grapes ; the vine is left to perish on the dust-heap. I admit, however, that the present Government can hardly be expected to make exertions to revive the Ottoman Assemblies unless impelled in some degree by national opinion. Those bodies came into existence, or, at least, apparently, as a counter-project to the schemes of the noble Marquess and of General Ignatieff, in the Conference which went on at Constantinople towards the close of 1876. Their origin, however, is wholly independent of that circumstance. They would have appeared if the noble Marquess and General Ignatieff had never met, and if the Conference which I have referred to had never come into existence. They were the outcome of a movement some time before against the Sultan Abdul Aziz. The object of their founder was a higher and more substantial one than that of rivalling or parrying the scheme which the Conference had organised. But, in consequence of the moment at which they first appeared, there was an inclination to disparage them among the friends of the alternative proposals which that Conference matured, and which the Porte refused to acquiesce in on grounds explained in Despatches of January 25th and March 31st, 1877, just before the war was imminent. But the language of the noble Marquess soon modified on that subject. In 1878 his Despatches to Sir Henry Layard, which I have had a recent opportunity of glancing at, admit that the Constitution of 1876 may be at least a partial basis of reforms to be initiated. But, my Lords, that I may not be too retrospective, I pass at once to the Correspondence now before us. The acquittal of Moussa Bey, in itself, sufficed to condemn the institutions under which it happened. The noble Marquess and Sir William White have mingled and accentuated their concurring protests on that subject. But, in order to correct tribunals, you must correct the power which underlies them. It is the great lesson of our history. The Revolution of 1688 was marvellous in its effects on justice. You would have had no Sir John Holt if you had had no Prince of Orange. Beyond that, if nothing is now done, a brilliant opportunity to recover influence will be abandoned. The power which comes forward to revive the Ottoman Assemblies will have in some degree the credit of establishing them. In different regions, in Armenia, in Albania, in Asia Minor, Syria and Kurdistan, the divided races would combine to exult in its design and welcome its initiative. It cannot be denied, indeed, Her Majesty's Government have frequently admitted, that the Conference of 1876, the war of 1877, the turn of subsequent events, have deeply compromised our influence. The aim would be by some new method to restore it to the elevation which it reached after the events of the Crimea. If Great Britain cannot be hailed as a defending, she may yet be cherished as a liberating Power in all the regions I have mentioned. But here it should not be forgotten, if that mode of looking at the subject is correct, that the opportunity may be a very transient one. There is a series of contingencies which might entirely withdraw it. The Sultan may himself determine to restore the

Ottoman Assemblies, under a secret influence too difficult to analyse. An insurrection might arise, like that of the Softas in 1876, to call for these Assemblies or to suggest the policy of granting them. A Grand Vizier, anxious to stamp his name or benefit his country, might resolve to tread in the now abandoned path of Midhat Pasha. Some calculating Power might desire to recover over these Assemblies the influence to which the Polish Diets used to be subject. It is only now that Great Britain can secure priority, ascendancy, and gratitude, by moving. It will not be denied that many methods would be open. The Armenian movement which is not, as far as I know, yet extinguished, might easily be drawn into the channel. The British Embassy, of course, may well be called into activity. If all other methods fail a special mission might be easily defended. No doubt the chances of succeeding may not be equal to the risk of failing. It is not easy to persuade an arbitrary sovereign to share his power with representatives, but come what may, there must be yet advantage to Great Britain. If the assemblies are restored a British object is arrived at. If a deaf ear is offered to well supported admonition we should be less firmly bound by obligations which now weigh upon us; we should be more entitled to enter upon other lines, to contemplate experiments which policy suggests, but honour would not sanction at this moment. Her Majesty's Government, I think, are able to concur with me that, before you contemplate a new system on the Bosphorus, before you overthrow the landmark which the fall of the Byzantine Empire created, you are bound to give the Ottoman Dominion, which, through so many wonderful vicissitudes, has endured 400 years, the latest prospect of surviving. In urging, as I only do, however, subject to the light which further correspondence throws upon the subject, the revival of the Ottoman Assemblies, I am not blind in any manner to the merits which belong to the existing ruler of that Empire. His zeal and industry are universally acknowledged. His liberality to the Armenian prisoners has recommended him to Europe. It is enough, perhaps, if we admit that there is no one else to whom despotic power could be so usefully confided. And here I cannot help remarking that there is a chain, a succession of authorities presiding over the Ottoman Empire, who have all been genuine reformers in design, but all oppressed and thwarted by malignant obstacles around them. Sultan Mahmoud, if I am not entirely deceived, was inclined to many salutary measures besides the war which he conducted against the Janissaries, and with which his name has been conspicuously identified. Abdul-Medjid, who immediately succeeded him in 1839, promulgated most excellent decrees—that of Gulhané, which was famous—in order to create a new departure in the Empire. Abdul-Aziz, who succeeded him, I think in 1862, was for many years looked upon as a champion of improvement in that respect, and was welcomed in this country, in this capital, while yet his melancholy end may be remembered by your Lordships. The fact is that, as regards the autocratic system in that country, bad rulers are insufficient to condemn it. It is by good rulers that its inherent vices must be stigmatised. When you have men like Nero and Domitian, their characters may be the mainspring of abuses which betray themselves. It is far graver that a system is incurable when men like Trajan and the Antonines direct it. The strongest argument against autocracy in Turkey, and the most difficult to answer, is that during half a century the greatest minds, greatest virtues, when placed upon the Throne, have not been able to redeem it. My Lords, as I think the Government intend to produce some further Correspondence, there will not, I trust, be any technical objection to the Motion now submitted to your Lordships.

Moved, "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty for further Papers in connection with the Eastern Question."—(*The Lord Stratheden and Campbell.*)

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, if I followed rightly the thread of the noble Lord's discourse, his object was to persuade the House that it was the duty of Her Majesty's Government to take steps for establishing representative Government at Constantinople. He referred with eulogy to a Representative Assembly which sat at Constantinople for a short time, but whose precise exploits I am unable to remember. He said that, if we could not do what he suggested, other Powers might anticipate us, or that the Sultan might be moved by a sudden desire for representative institutions, or that some Grand Vizier might desire to tread in the path of Midhat Pasha. From all I have heard of Midhat Pasha, I doubt whether any Grand Vizier would desire to follow his career, because it ended in a very unfortunate manner. My Lords, I do not feel very competent to express an opinion upon the value of representative institutions at Constantinople. We have never yet seen representative institutions successfully conducted by a Mahomedan population, and I am not aware that the experiment of Midhat Pasha was enthusiastically received by the population of the Empire, or that any regrets were expressed when it disappeared. I have seen many things stated as to the wishes of the people in various parts of the Empire; but it has never been my fortune to come across any expression of a desire that that transitory institution should be revived. If I were forced to give an opinion, therefore, I should be rather doubtful whether there is any strong desire for the institution of such a Government, and I should be more than doubtful whether the present Sultan is an enthusiastic admirer of representative institutions. But, whatever may be the facts with respect to these points, I would submit to the noble Lord that we have sufficient trouble at home and in our colonies, in managing representative and other institutions, and that it is not our business to set about extending them to Constantinople. If the people of Turkey want Representative Institutions, I have no doubt they will get them; but if they want them and get them, they probably are capable of working them, and they may come to some good. But if they are imposed by a foreign and distant State, by a people who have no sympathy whatever in religion, in manners, or in political life with the existing inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, the probability is that institutions which we should foist upon them would be utterly foreign to their nature, and would not succeed in producing contentment, or in administering to the prosperity of the country. Without, therefore, venturing to pronounce dogmatically as to whether there ought to be representative institutions or not at Constantinople, I say it is no business of ours, and that we shall best consult our own credit and the advantage of our own and other people by confining ourselves to our own business. There are Papers in preparation which it will probably be more convenient should be laid before Parliament in the ordinary form, as by command of Her Majesty, rather than in compliance with Motion; but if the noble Lord still wishes to move for them, I have no objection.

*LORD STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL: As the noble Marquess is so good as to assent to the Motion, I have no wish further to detain the House; but I think that considering the great importance that attaches to his language it ought to be remarked that when we disclaim all responsibility for what goes on in that distant country we entirely forget that the established policy of Great Britain, of which the noble Marquess is but a passing organ, has been to insist upon Ottoman reforms, upon Ottoman improvements, and actively to protest against all abuses in the administration of that Empire. If it can be reasonably established that such a mode of acting is thoroughly exhausted, and has irrevocably failed, it must be rational and politic to attempt the sole alternative which offers itself.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I would merely suggest to the noble Lord that from the librarian's point of view it is not very convenient in the case of a series of Papers such as this, which are printed by command, to present one portion separately. It is merely a question of convenience, and if the noble Lord would not press his Motion now I think it would be advisable on that account.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I will undertake that the Papers shall be laid in a few days.

Motion (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

House adjourned at ten minutes past
Five o'clock, till To-morrow,
a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 9th March, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

SHEIKH ABDUL RASOUL.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can now specify the particular Statute Law or Regulation under which the Indian Government arrested Sheikh Abdul Rasoul and imprisoned him for nine months without trial and without bringing any charge against him; (2) whether the Regulation under which the Government acted in this matter is the same as that under which Henry Silk Buckingham was deported from India in or about the year 1818; (3) whether such Regulation has ever been embodied in the Indian Penal Code; (4) whether he can state the circumstances under which this Regulation was continued after the transfer of the powers of the old East India Company to the Imperial Government; (5) whether he will give a Return of the names of all the persons, native or otherwise, who have been arrested without charge or trial and deported under this or any other Statute or Regulation during the last 50 years, together with the particular circumstances of each case; and (6) whether there exists in India any Habeas Corpus Act or other statutory provision whereby any person so arrested without warrant may claim to be brought to trial without delay?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): In the absence of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for India, I have been requested to answer the question. (1) Regulation III. of 1818, as stated on the 16th of February. (2) No. (3) No. (4) It was retained in the interests of public safety. (5) The Secretary of State considers that it would be detrimental to the public interest to publish such a Return. (6) No.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can now state the result of his inquiries into the case of Sheikh Abdul Rasoul; what was the result of the interview, which took place on the 5th instant, between Rasoul and Sir Gerald Fitzgerald at the India Office; (2) whether the Government have offered to pay to Rasoul the expenses he has incurred in this country since he was deported from India and landed here against his will, and to give him a passage back to India; (3) will he explain on what grounds the Government have refused Rasoul any compensation for the imprisonment inflicted upon him, and will he now either state the cause of complaint, or prefer a charge against him; and (4) in the event of Rasoul returning to India, either on his own account or at the expense of the Government, will they give him a guarantee against future arrest or molestation?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: (1) Abdul Rasoul was offered: The refund of his expenses since arrival in November, 1890; a passage to Bombay, and permission to return to Kashmir. (2) He was sent to London at his own request. (3) If Abdul Rasoul demands compensation, he should address himself, in the first instance, to the Government of India, and, in the event of their refusing him redress, appeal to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State is not in possession of information which enables him to state the cause of complaint or prefer any charge. (4) Abdul Rasoul has been informed that he will not be arrested in the absence of fresh offence.

MR. CONYBEARE: I do not understand from the right hon. Baronet that any offence has been alleged against this unfortunate man. If so, why are the Government proposing to send him back to India at their own expense?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: The Secretary of State has not been called upon to consider the merits of the case, but only the operation of the Regulation which has already been referred to.

MR. CONYBEARE: May I ask the right hon. Baronet if the Government will kindly consider whether the course taken in reference to Henry Silk Buckingham may not be adopted in this case? Mr. Buckingham was deported from India, and was allowed to receive compensation for loss of office. Will the Indian Government advise that a similar course shall be pursued in regard to Abdul Rasoul?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: That is a question which I am not in a position to answer.

LICENSED OPIUM SHOPS IN INDIA.

Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether he can state the number of opium shops which are licensed by the Government in India, and whether they amount to more than 10,000; (2) whether his attention has been drawn to a statement that the consumption of opium in Lucknow has increased from 36,240 tolas in 1883-4 to 64,320 tolas in 1887-8, and whether he has reason to believe that this statement is correct; (3) whether he can state if the consumption of opium in India is increasing generally; (4) whether his attention has been drawn to a meeting called by the Chinese Authorities at Singapore to petition Parliament to put a stop to the opium trade on account of its injurious tendency; (5) whether he is aware that nearly half the revenue of Singapore is derived from the opium traffic; and (6) whether, seeing that in Great Britain it is unlawful to sell opium except by a duly qualified and registered druggist under stringent regulations and labelled poison, Her Majesty's Government will take into consideration the expediency of adopting similar provisions with regard to its sale in India?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: (1) 10,417. (2) The attention of the Secretary of State has not been drawn to the statement referred to, but the consumption in Lucknow has increased in the proportion stated. (3) The consumption is slowly increasing. (4 and 5) Are matters for the Colonial Office. (6) The Secretary of State is not prepared to adopt such a provision.

POST OFFICE SICK LEAVE.

Mr. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the Regulations of the Post Office respecting sick leave are in accordance with the provisions of Clause 9, sub-section (1), of the Order in Council of 21st March, 1890, and, if not, whether he is prepared at once to issue instructions for carrying the Order in question so far as the clerks of the Second Division attached to the Post Office may be concerned?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, Cambridge University): The Regulations of the Post Office respecting sick leave are, so far as I am aware, not inconsistent with the provisions of Clause 9 of the Order in Council. That clause provides that no Second Division clerk shall be absent ill for more than two days without furnishing a medical certificate. That is to say, two days is to be the maximum period allowed before a medical certificate is furnished. But this is not equivalent to saying that a medical certificate shall not be required before the third day. The Post Office practice is to require one on the second day and in the Order in Council, as I read it, there is nothing to require that the Post Office practice should be altered.

THE VOLUNTEER INFANTRY.

Mr. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye) I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, with reference to the seventh paragraph of his Memorandum relating to the Army Estimates 1891-2, he can state the general military policy upon which increases in the Establishment of Volunteer Infantry have hitherto been sanctioned or refused; whether, in view of the recent reduction in the numbers of enrolled Volunteers, any modification has been permitted in the observance of a due proportion of strength between the two principal arms of the Volunteer Forces; and whether he can conveniently state the ground, military or otherwise, on which any such modifications have recently been allowed?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Increases in the Establishment of Volunteer Infantry have been granted or refused with reference to local requirements under the scheme of mobilisation, to the interests of adjoining corps, and to the probabilities of recruiting. Local defence considerations have been specially considered in every case in which increases have been sanctioned. Any recent modifications of Establishment have been settled on the basis indicated above.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN BIRKENHEAD.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the statement of Mr. Kynnersley, Her Majesty's Inspector, published in the last General Report of Mr. Blandford, Her Majesty's Inspector (Blue Book, 1889, p. 270), that—

> "It is now only in Birkenhead and Runcorn that we have really objectionable buildings,"

and to the statement recently made by the Chairman of the School Attendance Committee of that borough that—

> "The number of school places in the Public Elementary Schools of the Borough of Birkenhead, measured at eight feet per child, is 15,665;"

or, if not, what is the correct number; whether he is aware that the population of Birkenhead, as estimated in the Registrar General's Returns for the year ending 27th September, 1890, is 105,049; whether, on the calculation of the Department that school places are required for one-sixth of the population, there should be 17,508 school places in Birkenhead, and whether there is therefore an actual deficiency of at least 1,843 places, which, if the Voluntary Schools were measured in accordance with the Luton letter of the Department (Parliamentary Return, No. 173, 1889), would be increased by about 2,000 places; and whether he will obtain from Her Majesty's Inspector a Report on the school supply of Birkenhead, both as to its amount and quality, having regard to its suitability as to fee, and take steps to secure that adequate provision be made for the education of the population of that town?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I have seen Mr. Kynnersley's statement; but if the right hon. Gentleman had pursued his investigations a little further, he might have observed that the Inspector goes on to notice the extraordinary fluctuations to which the population of Birkenhead is liable. That being so, I prefer to await the result of the forthcoming Census before expressing an opinion as to the accuracy of the Registrar General's estimate. The number of school places in Birkenhead is 15,668, but the highest weekly average during any part of last year was only 14,389. The circumstances of the town are wholly dissimilar from those which gave rise to the Luton letter; and I am surprised that my right hon. Friend, if he has read that letter, should have fallen into the obvious error of citing it as applicable to the present case. So far as my information goes, no complaint of any deficiency has reached the Department; but it is part of their ordinary duty, which they are prepared to fulfil, to see that adequate provision is made for the education of the population.

DIRECTORS' LIABILITY ACT.

MR. STANSFELD (Halifax): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether his attention has been drawn to any recent advertisements or prospectuses of companies in which it is stated that applicants for shares shall be deemed "absolutely to waive all rights to compensation under 'The Directors' Liability Act, 1890;'" and whether such an announcement is an evasion of the provisions of that Act?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): My attention has not been called to any such advertisements or prospectuses, but, having regard to the practices which were attempted under the Act of 1867, I think it quite possible that such advertisements may have been issued. The practice would rather be an avoiding than an evasion of the Act of 1890. It would not be a criminal offence.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): May I ask if it is the duty of any public official to prosecute for such an avoidance of the law?

SIR R. WEBSTER: It would not be my duty to institute a prosecution.

INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS BILL.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that great dissatisfaction and even alarm exists among sellers and consumers of petroleum oil in all parts of the country, and especially among the working and poorer classes, at the provisions of the Inflammable Liquids Bill; and whether there is any truth in the statements in the newspapers that the

Government, in consequence of the adverse opinion so generally expressed of the Bill, are prepared to withdraw it?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; I am aware that considerable opposition has been manifested by the retailers of petroleum oil against this Bill. I have no information about consumers. This opposition appears to have arisen without a sufficiently careful examination of the proposed measure, which is framed with a view of safeguarding small retailers, and which improves the position of hawkers. If the hon. Member will refer to the Bill of 1883, and to the Report of the House of Lords Committee upon it, he will see that large concessions have been made to the convenience of traders in the Bill of this year, which has been introduced after repeated conferences with the trade, and in consequence of the strong representations of Local Authorities and of the Admiralty, the Board of Trade, the Thames Conservators, the London County Council, and other Public Bodies that amended legislation is urgently needed in the interests of public safety. I shall, however, be glad to consider any proposals for amendments in detail where it is shown that the Bill is of too restrictive a character. The answer to the second paragraph is in the negative.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will lay upon the Table copies of the Memorials he has received?

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman say at the same time whether he will allow a full discussion upon the Second Reading of the Bill?

MR. MATTHEWS: No doubt there will be a full discussion on the Second Reading.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): Are we to understand that the Second Reading will not be taken on this side of Easter?

MR. MATTHEWS: It will not be possible to take it on this side of Easter; but it is a matter which will be arranged by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House.

MR. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman when the Memorandum of Data and Reasons on which this Bill is based, and which he was good enough to promise, will be issued; and whether he will defer the Second Reading of the Bill for a sufficient period to allow of the Memorandum being publicly ventilated and considered by the many trades and industries affected?

MR. MATTHEWS: I hope that the Memorandum which I have promised my hon. Friend will be in the hands of Members in the course of a week or ten days, and I will defer the Second Reading of the Bill until a reasonable time has elapsed for its consideration.

EVICTIONS IN SOMERS TOWN.

MR. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether information has reached him that the agents of the Midland Railway Company or others are pulling down houses in Somers Town, St. Pancras, and, in consequence, evicting many of the inhabitants, without having previously erected dwellings for those displaced; and, as this is not only a severe injury to the evicted tenants, but a serious damage to the trade of the neighbourhood, whether he will have steps taken to have the strict spirit of Section 33 of "The Midland Railway (Additional Powers) Act, 1890," stringently enforced, in the interest of the inhabitants of Somers Town?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; information to that effect has reached me, but I have made careful and independent inquiry, and I find that the houses in question have not been demolished at the instance of the Railway Company, but of a private freeholder, whose solicitors inform me that the site has been cleared for rebuilding under the requirements of a reversionary lease granted to their clients in 1882, and that most of the houses were in a thoroughly insanitary condition, and altogether unfit for human habitation. As I stated in reply to a question on the 24th of January last, I have no reason whatever to believe that the Railway Company intend to evade their legal obligations, and they are now preparing a scheme for my approval with the view to giving effect to the 33rd section of the Act quoted.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER: Will the right hon. Gentleman state the name of his adviser?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have not got the name with me, but I will tell my hon. Friend privately.

THE SOUDAN.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether any Proclamation has been issued by the Military Commanders at Suakin as to the intentions of the Egyptian Government towards the tribes; whether any terms have been made with the tribes in the neighbourhood of Suakin and Tokar, for the purposes of common action against the approach of hostile forces from Kassala; and whether at the fall of Afafite and Tokar, any prisoners were captured; and, if so, in what way they have been disposed of?

Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg also to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the prisoners taken by the Egyptian force at the recent engagement at Tokar are to be deemed and treated as prisoners of war; whether these prisoners are to be detained; and whether it is intended to convey them to the place of their detention on any of Her Majesty's ships?

Sir J. FERGUSSON: A telegram has been received to the effect that a Proclamation has been issued by the Military Commander stating that the Egyptian Government has resumed its authority in the district about Tokar, calling on the tribes to repel the Dervishes, and granting amnesty to all except some notorious slave dealers; also that there is no intention of retiring from Tokar. Definite arrangements will not be made till the Sirdar has returned to Cairo. Of the prisoners taken 231 were released, and 300, including families considered dangerous, are for the present detained. Sir Francis Grenfell had ridden through the neighbouring country and had found it quiet and clear of Dervishes. The people were rejoiced at the re-appearance of Government in their neighbourhood.

Mr. J. MORLEY: May I ask for particulars as to the detention of the prisoners? On a former occasion I believe many prisoners were taken away and sold as slaves.

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I cannot give further particulars, but I have no reason to believe that the prisoners would be harshly treated. I know that after the engagement at Tosti, on the Nile, all who were not considered dangerous were allowed to return to their villages, or were given land in Lower Egypt, and that even when the Dervish prisoners were released they preferred to stay where they were.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Are these men who have been "rightly struggling to be free" to be deported to Lower Egypt, and for what purpose has the amnesty decree been issued by the Khedive?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I did not refer to those who had been "rightly struggling to be free," but to those who have been harrassing the country and raiding about Suakin.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Am I to understand that these people are recognised as the inhabitants of the Soudan, a part of the country over which Egypt has abandoned all authority?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: The hon. Gentleman is not to understand all that from my answer. I am not in a position to give more particulars than I have already given.

Mr. J. MORLEY: When will the right hon. Gentleman produce the Papers?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: I believe that the Papers on the subject are almost ready.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether an officer in Her Majesty's Service has been recommended for the Victoria Cross on account of his conduct at the recent engagement between the Egyptian forces and the forces of the Mahdi at Tokar; and whether, if so, there is any instance of an officer in Her Majesty's Service being recommended for the Victoria Cross on account of conduct in an encounter between the forces of two Powers with neither of which this country is at war?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: No officer has been recommended for the Victoria Cross in connection with the recent engagement at Tokar.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any Egyptian troops, or any stores or ammunition for any Egyptian troops, have been conveyed in any of Her Majesty's ships between any ports on the Red Sea?

THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): No, Sir.

NATAL.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Bill to establish responsible government in Natal, passed by the Colonial Legislature, has been received by Her Majesty's Government; whether Her Majesty's Government had intimated to the colony the general conditions on which the Government were willing to advise Her Majesty to allow such a change; whether, subject to minor questions of detail, those conditions have been complied with; whether he will lay the Bill and Correspondence before the House; and whether the Government will delay advising Her Majesty to give her sanction to the Colonial Act till the House has become cognisant of what is being done and has had, in some shape, an opportunity of discussing it?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The answer to the first part of the hon. Member's question is no, and to the second yes. It is impossible to reply to the third question until the Bill has been received. As regards the last two questions Her Majesty's Government cannot at the present moment undertake to say that before they finally decide to grant responsible government to Natal, an opportunity for discussing the question in the House of Commons shall be given, because the intervention of Parliament is not necessary in this case; but when the Correspondence (which may yet be prolonged) is in a sufficiently complete state it will, with the Bill, be presented to Parliament.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK.

EARL COMPTON (York, W.R., Barnsley): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether any temporary clerks have recently been appointed to the Savings Bank Department who have not passed any Civil Service examination, and who do not hold certificates from the Civil Service Commissioners; whether such appointments have been sanctioned by the Treasury, and on what condition; whether there are candidates who have passed the Second Division examination still waiting for appointments; and whether any application has been made to the Treasury for permanent Second Division officers to fill these appointments in the Savings Bank Department; and, if not, whether he is able to give the reason why non-certificated clerks have been temporarily appointed in preference to properly certificated clerks? I beg further to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the 150 clerks from other Government Departments, who are employed on overtime in the Post Office Savings Bank after their official hours in other offices, owing to the working day of Savings Bank clerks having been limited to 10 hours, have access to the ledgers containing the depositors' accounts; and whether these clerks are required to make the statutory declaration as to secrecy, and to find the sureties which are required from other Savings Bank clerks; and, if not, whether precaution is taken in the interests of the public to guard against disclosures on the part of temporary clerks who are employed after ordinary office hours? I have also to ask the Postmaster General when his intention, as stated on the 2nd of March, to add 50 male officers to the minor staff of the Savings Bank Department, will be carried out?

*MR. RAIKES: It will I think be convenient to include in one answer the replies to the three questions of the noble Lord. In order to diminish the pressure of work in the Savings Bank, I obtained the sanction of the Treasury to place on special duty a temporary force of over 150 officers, who are now at work there. This force is composed of about 130 clerks belonging to other offices, and holding Civil Service certificates, of 8 certificated Second Division clerks lent by the Civil Service Commissioners, and of 15 non-certificated assistants, for whose employment I obtained special Treasury authority. I have no knowledge whether there are any other candidates who have passed the Civil Service Examination and are waiting for appointments. I have not yet come to a decision as to the number of clerks to be permanently added to the Establishment, but, having regard to the recent conduct of a considerable portion of the Second Division Staff, I am not at present disposed to add any recruits to that section of the Establishment. My answer to the first portion of the second question is in the affirmative. The Statutory Declaration to which the noble Lord refers does not mention the word secrecy, and is not very relevant to Savings Bank work, but there is a clause in the Savings Bank Act of 1861 which forbids all officers of the Postmaster General engaged in Savings Bank business to disclose the name of any depositor or the amount deposited or withdrawn except to the Postmaster General and his officers. I have not thought it necessary to ask the provisional force to find sureties during their temporary employment; but they are carefully supervised, and I have no reason to doubt that they will comply with the terms of the Act which I have quoted. In reply to the last question, I am making the additions required as rapidly as possibly. Fourteen additional messengers have already been placed on duty, and the female sorters will be obtained as quickly as possible.

CENTRAL TELEGRAPH OFFICE.

EARL COMPTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General, in view of the fact that telegraphists of the Central Telegraph Office, performing duty on Sundays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., have no stated time allowed for their mid-day meal, whether he will direct that they shall have an uninterrupted dinner time of half-an-hour, similar to that which is given to the staff on week-days?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the noble Lord, I have to state that at the Central Station special arrangements are made with a view to enable the telegraphists as far as possible to obtain their meals on Sundays without interruption. As regards the time occupied in taking them, there is no objection to as much as half-an hour being allowed for the purpose.

In answer to a further question from Earl COMPTON,

*MR. RAIKES said: My answer must be regarded as fixing the practice in future.

RAILWAY COMPANIES' LOAN AND DEBENTURE CAPITAL.

MR. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state the amount of loan and debenture capital invested with Railway Companies in the United Kingdom upon which no interest has been paid for the year 1889, and upon which the rate of interest actually paid fell short of that at which the principal was borrowed; how much, if any, of the total interest paid on the loan and debenture capital was provided for other than out of *bonâ fide* income; whether he will arrange to have similar information supplied in future Returns; and in case he has not the necessary authority to enable him to obtain the information now sought, whether he will consent to a Motion for a Return on the subject, if made?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I hardly think it is necessary to call specially for the information desired by the hon. Member, as, if he will compare the net earnings with the amount of debenture capital and rate of interest it bears, which are to be found in the Returns of Railway Capital already published, he will practically obtain what he wants.

TRAINING COLLEGES.

MR. DAVID THOMAS: I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he is aware that much dissatisfaction has been caused by the refusal of the authorities of certain Training Colleges to allow candidates for admission to be examined at centres, such as Merthyr Tydvil, Cardiff, and Swansea, which have been fixed for the examinations for Queen's Scholarships; and whether, having regard to the fact that these Training Colleges are supported mainly by Government Grants, he will impress upon the Committees of such Colleges the desirability of allowing candidates to sit for examination at any centre fixed by the Department?

SIR W. HART DYKE: I believe some complaint has been made, but it seems to me reasonable that the Training College Authorities, upon whom the responsibility rests of selecting the successful candidates for admission, should have an opportunity of seeing them. The centres to which the hon. Member refers are primarily intended for those who do not propose to enter college.

NONCONFORMIST FUNERALS.

MR. WILLIAM M'ARTHUR (Cornwall, Mid. St. Austell): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the circumstances attending the funeral of Mrs. White, a member of the Wesleyan Society, at Loddon, Norfolk, on the 11th February last; whether he is aware that the Vicar of Loddon was duly advised that the body was to be buried in the churchyard without the rites of the Church of England, pursuant to "The Burial Laws Amendment Act, 1880;" and that upon application being made to the sexton for the bell to be tolled at the funeral, that official, in reply, exhibited the Vicar's notice—namely,

> "The Act of Parliament respecting funerals which are not taken by the Clergy of the Established Church does not contemplate the tolling of the Church bell; the bell therefore will not be tolled at funerals except when conducted by the Clergy of the Church of England;"

that, although the bell was not tolled, the account of fees presented to Mr. White included a charge for the sexton of 1s. 6d. for the tolling of the bell at the funeral; and that upon Mr. White's protesting, the clerk refused to receive any payment at all unless all the fees were paid; whether the tolling of the church bell at the funeral of a Nonconformist in a churchyard under the Act of 1880 is included among the duties of the sexton; and whether, if the bell be not tolled, the parochial officers have a right to impose the fee charged for that service?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have received a telegram from the Vicar, from which I gather that the facts are as stated, except that the clerk did not refuse to receive any payment at all unless all the fees were paid. The duty of tolling the bell is prescribed by a Canon, the terms of which make it doubtful whether it applies to any persons but parishioners who have been attended by a minister or curate of the Church. I beg to refer the hon. Member to an answer which I gave in this House on July 30, 1888. The answer to the last paragraph depends on the proper construction of Section 5 of the Act of 1880, under which I presume the sexton as well as the Vicar considers himself entitled to the same fees as he would have been entitled to had the burial taken place according to the rites of the Church of England, although those rites are not performed.

EXCESSIVE DRINKING AT PUBLIC HOUSES.

MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to the continued and excessive drinking at public houses disclosed by the evidence in the inquest on the late Whitechapel murder, in which Sadler was described by two witnesses as "very drunk, and the deceased woman was stated to be half dazed with drink;" if it is correct that 2,309 persons were apprehended during the year 1889 for drunkenness in the Whitechapel police district; how many of the holders of licences in that district were proceeded against for permitting drunkenness during that year, and with what results; and if he will consider whether steps can be taken either to make the law, or the administration of the law in the Metropolis, more efficient in checking drunkenness?

MR. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; I gather from statements made before the coroner that the man Sadler had been drinking excessively from house to house. The figures quoted in the second paragraph are correct. There was one case where proceedings were taken for permitting drunkenness, and this was dismissed by the Magistrate. The Commissioner of Police assures me that every effort is made for the efficient enforcement of the law, and the figures quoted show that the police are not inactive. But the hon. Member is doubtless aware that there are great difficulties of proof in cases where publicans are charged with permitting drunkenness, and I do not think those difficulties will be removed by alteration of the law.

THE MARINES.

SIR JOHN POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty if he will state the total annual cost of the Marines; the total annual cost of the administration of the force; and the total annual cost of the relief of all the colonial garrisons?

LORD G. HAMILTON: The total number of Marines estimated for 1891-92 is 14,000. The total annual estimated cost of these numbers is £738,699, which includes £4,730, the total annual estimated cost of administration of the force. Taking the average of the current year and the two previous years, the cost of the relief of the British troops stationed abroad (excluding India) is estimated at £145,000 a year. These figures include the sea transport charges only.

SHIPPING LABOUR AT CONSTANTINOPLE.

MR. ATKINSON (Boston): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he has any advices from Sir William White respecting new regulations made at Constantinople, under which it is sought to take away the liberty of employing his own men, in discharging and loading, from the agent or captain of British steamers now in that port; and whether it is intended to protest against such changes, involving, as they do, extra expense?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: By a despatch received to-day from Her Majesty's Ambassador, it appears that there had been some attempt to restrict the unloading of cargoes to the members of an *Evnaf* or Union. As a monopoly in favour of a Corporation would be contrary to Treaty, Sir William White communicated with the Government, and the ships were discharged as usual.

THE WHITECHAPEL MURDER.

MR. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, if he has yet received a Report from the Chief Commissioner in regard to the evidence of the police as affecting their conduct in the case of Sadler; and, if so, whether he has any objection to lay it upon the Table?

MR. MATTHEWS: The Commissioner of Police informs me that the coroner's depositions confirm the statement I made on February 26th—namely, that there was no assault on Sadler in the presence of the police, and that the only constable who saw him at the dock gate did not consider him to be in such a state of intoxication as to require that he should be taken into custody, and this view was shared by another police constable who saw Sadler shortly afterwards. I have received no Report beyond the information supplied in consequence of the hon. Member's questions, and I have given the substance of that information.

MR. ESSLEMONT: Can access be obtained to the official evidence?

MR. MATTHEWS: No, Sir; the coroner's depositions are only made public in the event of a verdict of murder or manslaughter on the occasion of the trial by the authorities.

GOLD AND SILVER MINING IN THE COLONIES.

MR. W. PRITCHARD-MORGAN (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Attorney General, as regards the colonies of New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, and Western Australia, has the Crown parted with or transferred to the Legislatures of those colonies, not only the management and control of the waste lands of the Crown, but the gold and silver contained therein in such a way that the Crown cannot ever again make any claim to the gold and silver or to royalties thereupon; whether the Government is aware that the respective Governments of the colonies referred to insert in leases to work for gold a reservation that the grant is made "except as against Her Majesty," or "subject to Her Majesty's rights;" whether the effect of such reservations would enable the Crown, during the existence of such leases, to terminate such leases or resume possession of such mines; whether, on the termination of any such leases in the colonies referred to, Her Majesty could refuse to renew such leases, and take possession of such mines without compensation; whether the Crown is in receipt of any royalties from the gold and silver mines in the colonies referred to; and does the gold and silver in all Her Majesty's possessions, except the colonies referred to, still belong to the Crown; and, if so, does the Crown charge or receive any royalties from gold or silver mines in such possessions outside Great Britain?

SIR R. WEBSTER: The hon. Member appears to confound the rights of the

Crown as represented in the United Kingdom by the Imperial Government and the rights of the Crown as represented in the colonies by the several Colonial Governments. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the laws and practices of the different colonies to say more than that the Imperial Exchequer is not in receipt of any royalties from the gold and silver mines in the colonies named. By the Act 18 and 19 Vict., cap. 56, Sec. 4, the Legislatures of Tasmania and South Australia are empowered to regulate the sales and disposal of the waste lands of the Crown and the disposal of the proceeds arising therefrom for the public service of those colonies respectively. By the Act 15 and 16 Vict., cap. 72, Sec. 72, the General Assembly of New Zealand is empowered to make laws for regulating the sale, disposal, and occupation of the waste lands of the Crown. The different Australasian Colonies have, therefore, it would seem, power to deal with the Crown's royalty of gold and silver, but I am unable to tell the hon. Member in what way that power is exercised. In other colonies I understand that the Legislature, under its general powers of legislation, enacts its own regulations for gold fields, which, if assented to and not disallowed by Her Majesty, form the law of the colony upon this subject. I am informed that the Imperial Exchequer receives no royalties from the colonies in gold or silver.

TIED HOUSES.

MR. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, with the view of preventing the multiplication of "tied houses" in the various parts of the country, the Government will consider the advisability of calling the attention of the Licensing Authorities to the recently issued Return with respect to On-Licences, in which will be found the number of persons in each district, and the names of such persons who are on the register as owners of two, three, four, and any greater number of premises in respect of which On-Licences have been granted, with the number of such licences attached to each name?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am not aware that the Legislature has ever laid down a policy to be observed against the system of "tied houses," nor am I in possession of information to show that this system has produced any such mischief as to call for the interference of Government. It is for the Licensing Justices, who know the circumstances of their own district, to take such action as they think necessary.

RATING OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

MR. POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government is prepared to give facilities for the passing in this Session of the Bill to exempt public elementary schools from the payment of rates; and whether, if not so prepared, the Government will introduce a Bill in the course of the Session to relieve such schools from the oppressive burden which they now bear in consequence of their liability to the payment of rates?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I am afraid it is not in my power to promise the facilities which my hon. Friend asks for; but the Session is not so far advanced that he may not hope himself to find an opportunity of pressing a measure which I know finds favour with a very large number of Members. I am not at present able to say what course the Government would take in the event of my hon. Friend's failing to obtain the judgment of the House on his proposals.

ALLEGED INABILITY OF ONE OF THE JUDGES.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the attention of the Lord Chancellor and of other Members of the Government has been called to an article in the *Times* newspaper of March 6th, referring to the alleged inability of one of Her Majesty's Judges to perform his judicial duties; whether he has received from the honourable Member for the Rugby Division a letter informing him (according to his request made in the House of Commons), of the name of the Judge referred to in a question put on February 26th; and whether the Lord Chancellor or the Government intend to take any steps in the matter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH : I have to express my regret that the hon. Member should think it right to address this question to me. I wish to point out to him, what I have pointed out in the letter which I sent in answer to the letter addressed to me by the hon. Member, that it is the policy of the Government, of Parliament, and I might almost say of the Constitution, to respect the complete and absolute independence of the Judicial Bench. The Government have no authority whatever over a Judge of the land. The Government have no paternal or disciplinary authority in any way over a Judge of the land; and I have pointed out to the hon. Member that if he has reason to believe there is a failure of justice it is in his power, as well as in the power of any other hon. Member, to move an Address to the Crown for the removal of the Judge in question. That is the only course open to any hon. Member, whether he be a Member of the Government or of Parliament. I should earnestly deprecate any suggestion that it is the duty of the Government to bring pressure to bear on the Judges based on reports in newspapers, or on statements which are in any way deficient of allegations of positive fact as to the failure of justice. I must, decline, with all respect to the House, to discuss by question and answer across the floor of the House the conduct and capacity of any one of the Judges of the land.

Mr. COBB : I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he is aware that the incapacity of the Judge, whose name I gave him in a letter, is notorious, that it is, to use the words of the *Times*, the universal topic of conversation wherever lawyers meet, a subject of wonder and regret to the whole Profession. I wish to ask further, whether, having challenged me in this House last week to give publicly in the House the name of the Judge, and I having ascertained from the clerks at the Table that the course which the right hon. Gentleman invited me to take would not be in order, he has any objection to my publishing the correspondence which took place?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: If the hon. Member thinks it is to the public interest and to his own personal satisfaction to publish that correspondence he is perfectly entitled to do so.

NORTH OF IRELAND MAIL SERVICE.

Captain M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can now make a statement relative to the establishment of a mail service to and from the North of Ireland, by Larne and Stranraer?

*The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): No, Sir; I am not in a position to make a statement.

THE BANN DRAINAGE.

Mr. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, having regard to the difficulty of passing a larger measure through Parliament, the Government will introduce a Bill to allocate a portion of the £20,000 he proposed to spend upon the Bann Drainage, in order to relieve flooding, and discontinue a navigation little used, which imposes a tax of £1,200 a-year on the ratepayers?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): In answer to my hon. Friend, I have to say that the legislation he proposes would probably not be easier to pass through the House than that for which it is a substitute. I propose, however, to re-introduce the Bann Drainage Bill next year, in the hope that it may pass without serious opposition.

BALLYMONEY MODEL SCHOOL.

Sir CHARLES LEWIS (Antrim, N.) I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can explain why the children attending the Ballymoney Model School who live in Ballymoney have been prevented going to their homes during the play hour for meals, although this advantage has been enjoyed by the children for at least 20 years; whether he is aware that the parents unanimously memorialised the Commissioners of National Education, as also the Town Commissioners of Ballymoney, to permit the continuance of this practice, and that the prayer of the Memorial was granted to the extent of only two months, which expired at the end of last year, and that, though a second largely-signed Memorial wsa forwarded to the Commissioners expressing dissatisfaction with their reply to the first, praying for this benefit to be continued to their children without interruption, this Memorial has been entirely ignored; will he have the Inspector's Report, on which the action of the Commissioners of National Education was based, together with the Memorials referred to, laid upon the Table; and will he request the Commissioners to re-consider the matter, with the view of meeting the wishes of the parents and Local Authorities?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Commissioners of National Education report that the practice referred to at Ballymoney Model School was unauthorised, and contrary to the universal practice in regard to National Schools in Ireland, which is to have an unbroken school-day, including, where it is desired, an interval of half an hour for recreation and luncheon, under supervision of the teacher. The Commissioners, to prevent any inconvenience to the parents by a sudden change, did consent to a continuance of the irregular proceeding to the end of last year. The second Memorial referred to did not, as a matter of fact, reach the Commissioners Office; but a communication from the Town Clerk of Ballymoney was received. The Reports of the Commissioners' Inspectors are treated as confidential. The Commissioners consider the rule of having an unbroken school-day to be one necessary for the efficiency of their school system, and they are unable to sanction its non-observance.

USE OF FIREARMS BY IRISH CONSTABULARY.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the fact that a police constable named Connell, stationed at Schull, County Cork, deliberately loaded his rifle in the presence of a large assemblage of people returning from a meeting which was addressed by Mr. William O'Brien, M.P.; whether he is also aware that Connell, with another police constable, followed Mr. William O'Brien from Schull to Bantry, carrying a loaded rifle in his hand; and whether police constables, when following Irish Members of Parliament, are ordered to carry loaded firearms?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Constabulary authorities report that the fact is substantially as stated in the first paragraph of the question. The constable did not follow Mr. O'Brien to Bantry with a loaded rifle. There is no order extant in the Force of the nature indicated in the last paragraph.

THE LAND COMMISSION.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Rules made by the Land Commission and now in force can be laid upon the Table in a classified and collected form?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The Irish Land Commissioners represent that the course suggested in this question would involve considerable trouble and inconvenience in the present pressure of their business, and that at an early date, upon Bills which are now before the House becoming law, it will be necessary to revise some of the existing rules, and to make new rules leading to a new codification. Perhaps, therefore, the hon. Member will defer his request for a little time. I will, however, confer with them further on the subject.

DISTRESS IN ACHILL.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the distress alleged to exist in Achill; that many of the inhabitants are on the brink of starvation; whether he is aware that only a small proportion of the islanders have had relief work given them, these being obliged in numerous instances to travel very long distances to and from work; that the supply of seed potatoes has run short; that many of them have been found to be rotten, and that in many cases the good ones have been consumed for food; and whether any steps will be taken to remedy the alleged faults in relief of distress in Achill?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am unable to add anything to the reply which I gave on the same subject on Thursday last to the hon. Member for Darlington.

Dr. TANNER: Is it the fact that persons in this district have to travel 8 or 10 miles in order to get the relief at present supplied?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I cannot, without notice, give the exact distances travelled; but all those for whom the relief work is intended can, I believe, obtain it.

DR. TANNER: If I supply the right hon. Gentleman with instances, will he institute an inquiry?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Certainly.

THE EIGHT HOURS BILL.

SIR F. MILNER (Nottingham, Bassetlaw): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, considering there is no chance of a discussion being taken on the Eight Hours Bill on Wednesday, it will be possible to grant a day either before or after Easter in order to discuss the question?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I cannot agree with my hon. Friend that there is no chance of discussing this Bill on Wednesday. There is only one other Order of the Day before it; and if it is the desire of hon. Members that a discussion should take place, the preceding business might be disposed of by 2.30 or 3 o'clock, so as to enable the Eight Hours Bill to be taken up.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): When may we expect the Papers in regard to Newfoundland to be laid on the Table?

BARON H. DE WORMS: I cannot fix a date; but they are in the course of preparation.

MR. STAVELEY HILL: May we expect them on this side of Easter? They are very important Papers, and we were told that we should have them soon.

BARON H. DE WORMS: All I can say is that they are being pressed forward as rapidly as possible.

MOTION.

SUPPLY.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House will immediately resolve itself into the Committee of Supply."—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

*(4.16.) DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to move the substitution of the word "to-morrow" for "immediately." The purpose of the Amendment is to prevent such a Motion from becoming a regular piece of business on Mondays. The Motion is only resorted to when a Count-out has occurred on the previous Friday evening, and there would be no need for it at all if a House were kept. There would have been an ample opportunity for getting Supply if a House had been kept and business had been allowed to proceed. It is a recognised rule that it is the duty of the Government to keep a House on Fridays. Over and over again the Government have been lectured for adopting this practice by an ancient colleague, the right hon. Member for Whitehaven (Mr. Cavendish Bentinck), who has quoted for their benefit the importance attached to keeping a House, both by Lord Palmerston and the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone). Now that private Members have been deprived of so many opportunities of bringing forward grievances on the Motion to go into Supply, it is more than ever important that the Government should perform their duty in keeping a House on Fridays. There was a similar Motion brought forward last Monday, aad I did not challenge it, because I thought the Count-out on the Friday might have been an inadvertence. But when it is seen that the Counts-out are encouraged by the Government, it is time to take action. I beg to move the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "immediately," in order to insert the word "To-morrow,"—(*Dr. Cameron,*)—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the word 'immediately' stand part of the Question."

*(4.20.) MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Member has taken a curious method of punishing the Government for failing to keep a House on Friday. The hon. Member proposes practically to deprive private Members of their day for bringing forward Motions.

*DR. CAMERON: I beg the right hon. Gentleman's pardon. I do not propose anything of the kind.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Motion, if carried, would have that result.

*DR. CAMERON: No, not at all.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: That must be the inevitable result; because, as I have explained to the House more than once, the Supplementary Estimates must be concluded by March 16. I exceedingly regret the Count-out of Friday last, but I am not sure whether the hon. Member himself was in the House at the time. It is understood that if the Government make an effort to keep a House hon. Members who have Motions to bring forward will, at least, find some support among their own friends. On Friday evening the Government did their share, though the Count-out occurred at that most favourable moment for a count when hon. Members and even Ministers found it necessary to take a little refreshment. The fact that there were 38 Members present showed that the Government did their part; and it is evident that hon. Members opposite failed to come to the assistance of their champion who wished to bring about universal Home Rule. I hope the House will not longer debate the question and still further limit the time at our disposal for obtaining Supply. I greatly regret that it was not possible to go on with the Debate on Friday night, because some fallacies of hon. Gentlemen opposite might have been easily exposed and exploded.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I beg pardon. I will not further refer to the Debate of Friday, but I will merely add that I learnt on Friday, through the usual channels of information, that there was no prospect whatever of the Government reaching Supply that evening. I hope that the House will now consent to proceed with business.

(4.23.) DR. TANNER: Any one present last Friday must have been perfectly aware that outside in the Lobby, at the time of the count, there was at least a score of Members, including some junior Members of the Government, who did their best to obstruct other hon. Members, including myself, from entering the House. Everybody knows that the right hon. Gentleman does his best in his own highly respectable way, but I think he ought to make himself better informed in regard to what takes place in the House.

(4.25.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): I do not blame the Government. It seems that it is their policy to discredit private Members, in order that they may take Friday nights for Supply. After all, the matter rests with private Members to decide.

The House divided:—Ayes 184; Noes 42.—(Div. List, No. 79.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, "That this House will immediately resolve itself into the Committee of Supply."

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

NAVY (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1890-91.)

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. £350,000, Supplementary, Navy Services.

(4.0.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I think the Committee will expect me to make some explanation of this Vote. When I introduced the Naval Defence Act I pointed out the extreme inconvenience of paying large balances into the Exchequer at the close of the financial year, whilst liabilities were carried forward to the following year. That system caused considerable disturbances in the continuity of finance. Therefore, an arrangement was made under the Naval Defence Act, by which all unexpended balances appropriated for specific purposes should be carried forward from year to year, and paid to the credit of the Naval Defence Act. In the interval between the making of my speech and the introduction of the Bill, the measure was in parts revised, and one or two alterations, which seemed to be only of a verbal character, were introduced into it. This year we had to put ourselves into communication with the Treasury for the purpose of asking them to allow us to make use of the unexpended balance of last year for the purpose of meeting the liabilities which fall upon the present financial year. Under Clause 3, Subsection A, of the Act, it was provided, that for the purpose of dock-yards, &c.—

> "The sum £2,650,000, or such less sum as may be required by the Admiralty, may be devoted in any one year,".

and so on. In the same clause it was also provided that if any portion of the sum that could be applied in pursuance of the section was not expended, that portion should be transferred to the Naval Defence Act. As the Act was passed, the words "or such less sum as may be required by the Admiralty" were omitted from the section. To my simple lay mind it appeared that the omission was of no importance. The Treasury, however, who are the prime Authority in this matter, decided otherwise, and they ruled that no part of the unexpended balances could be appropriated in any one year in which a less sum than £2,650,000 had been voted. In the present financial year we have not taken the sum of £2,650,000, and, therefore, the Treasury ruled that the unexpended balances could not be utilised, and any excess that was required must be voted on a Supplementary Estimate. That is the reason why we ask the House to vote the sum of £350,000 and at the same time carry forward a balance of £542,000. The person who suffers is the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because it diminishes this year the amount of his realised surplus, which otherwise would have gone to the reduction of debt. I will take care that next year the maximum sum is voted. I ought to add that there is an excess of £50,000 under the head of coals for steam-vessels. This is due to the Navy having had to perform a far larger amount of blockade work on the east coast of Africa than was anticipated, and also to the fact that a large number of ships of the latest type have been this year placed in commission, and that the amount of coal consumed by the triple-expansion engines has been larger than was anticipated. One of the merits of the triple-expansion engines is that they economise coal. But our experience in the Navy is that when these engines are used at a low rate of speed there is, comparatively, a larger amount of coal consumed. This, combined with the extra amount of work we have had to do, is the cause of this excess of £50,000 for steam-vessels. I have thought it right to make these points clear.

(4.47.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I think the noble Lord has made a very clear and valuable statement. I have no reason to complain of the fulness of his statement in any way, but at the same time, looking back to last year, it seems extraordinary that the Admiralty should have fallen into the mistake he now admits they did as to the meaning of the Naval Defence Act. Bearing in mind the construction of that Act, I cannot understand how the Admiralty could suppose that they could resort to the unexpended balances of the previous year, or to paying for work of the current year out of the Estimates of future years, until the £2,650,000 provided for in the Naval Defence Act had been expended. I have always contended that the course the Admiralty have pursued is calculated to confuse the Navy Estimates and prevent the possibility of yearly comparisons being made, and what has taken place has shown that I have been right. The fact is that the House was not told last year that the Admiralty did not propose to take in the Vote the total sum of £2,650,000, contemplated by the Naval Defence Act. The House was led to believe that the Estimates for the current year would include that sum. Although the right hon. Gentleman is right in saying that the Act provided that either the £2,650,000, or a less sum, might be expended, yet the statements and tables placed before the House at the time the Act was under discussion indicated that year by year that sum would be proposed and voted by the House. Now it appears, a less sum than the £2,650,000 is actually provided in the Estimates for the current year, but the amount is not stated, and the effect is, I repeat, to confuse the finances and to prevent hon. Members from following or comparing them. I hold that last year the Navy Estimates ought to have been increased by £300,000 at least in order to bring up the anticipated expenditure under the Act to a total of £2,650,000. Not having done so the noble Lord was not entitled to look forward to the unexpended balances of previous years, or to the Votes of years to come. What is certain is that the Navy Estimates last year were less by £300,000 than they ought to have been, and to that extent comparisons with past and future years are disturbed.

(4.54.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): This is a very serious matter and is one of the first fruits of that extraordinary confusion into which the whole financial system we have built up with so much care has been drawn, by the new methods adopted by the present Government and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian alluded to the manner in which the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has overthrown all those financial principles for which he was originally the greatest authority and the greatest stickler. The right hon. Gentleman has now introduced what I may call the abominable foreign system of ordinary and extraordinary expenditure—a system that has ruined the finances of France and other Continental nations; and, although formerly nobody protested more strongly against it than the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, he seems to have now adopted it as a fundamental feature of his Budgets. He seems to have departed from every principle laid down by his predecessor, Sir Stafford Northcote. Sir Stafford Northcote established a Sinking Fund, and devoted £28,000,000 a year to the service of the debt; but the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has reduced that amount to £25,000,000, and now he has adopted the principle of extraordinary Budgets, which in the year 1879 he denounced when on one occasion Sir Stafford Northcote made a slight departure from the principle of providing for the expenditure of the year out of the resources of the year. When, in 1879, the Government of that day having great difficulties abroad and heavy expenditure on hand, Sir Stafford Northcote proposed to make provision for £5,000,000, or some such sum, and to throw it over two years, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer loudly protested against it. What is the state of things now, when there is no extraordinary call for expenditure? There are £2,600,000 under the Imperial Defence Act, £10,000,000 or £11,000,000 under the Naval Defence Act, and £4,000,000 under the Barracks Act, which in successive years have been charged, not upon any provision of the year, but upon mortgaging the future resources of the country. That is what I call the new and vicious system of extraordinary Budgets. What did the right hon. Gentleman say about this in the year 1879—a little more than 10 years ago? He said—

> "The fact was, the House had lost its power as to the expenditure of the country through the introduction of this distinction between ordinary and extraordinary expenditure."

That is exactly our position now. I asked the right hon. Gentleman a question the other day to which he did not give me a very definite answer; but I venture to say that he has got the finances of the country into such a condition that it will be necessary to have three Budgets in order to clearly understand how we stand—the ordinary or old English Budget, an extraordinary or French Budget, and a local expenditure Budget—because every week, when the finance accounts are presented, you see "so much" received by the Exchequer and notes below, "so much paid over to the local fund"—so that we have now arrived at a point when it is impossible to know where you are unless you have three Budgets presented. That is a new system of finance on which we have entered. In the very speech denouncing Sir Stafford Northcote for a very mild offence compared with that of the present Government, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said—

> "While they hunted with the hounds they ran with the hare. After singing 'Rule Britannia' at Conservative dinners all over the country, with might and main, they come down to this House, as the First Lord of the Admiralty did the other night, to confess themselves the devoted and convinced disciples and champions of 'Peace, retrenchment and reform.'"

That was the view the Chancellor of the Exchequer took of the Government of the day, and of this system of extraordinary Budgets. We know what these Budgets are meant for. The practise has been introduced by the Government in order that they may pose before the country as men who expend large sums of money in the defences of the country and yet escape the inconvenience of asking the people to pay for them. That was denounced as a vicious and cowardly policy by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Last year a Return was presented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the Motion of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford which showed that, at the very time that the right hon. Gentleman was pretending to take off taxes, he had failed to meet the liabilities of the year by £4,000,000. That is the policy laid down by the right hon. Gentleman, who said that the

Government had not shrunk from the test of making those sacrifices which were necessary for providing for the expenditure of the year. He said, and I would commend his words to the attention of the Administration—

> "It is an exhibition of an apparently strong policy carried out by weak men—I do not mean weak intellectually, but men wanting in the nerve and courage to face unpopularity. They had shown a want of confidence in the willingness of the country to bear the burdens, which were the resu't of their policy The whole secret of these extraordinary Budgets—this doctrine of spreading the expenditure of untold millions over a series of years, is to induce the people to agree to it, on condition that they shall not be bound to pay for it at present, but at some future time when it may be convenient."

And the right hon. Gentleman said, of a system which was really microscopic as compared with this gigantic conversion of it, that he was anxious to protest against a Budget, which appeared to him to be shabby, flabby, and inadequate to the occasion. He was also good enough to pay me the compliment of quoting from a speech I had made to my constituents, and to add that he could but use the witty expression of his hon. and learned Friend the Member for Oxford about "Peace with honour, on tick." These were the doctrines of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer 10 years ago; yet since he has occupied his present position he has been responsible for the expenditure of millions which are not to be repaid until convenient. The fact is that the right hon. Gentleman has violated every one of the principles which he himself laid down. He has been a party to three Acts of Parliament, in three successive years, which provide for the expenditure of millions of money which are not to be met out of the taxation of the year. Nor was this at a time of difficulty at home or abroad. The right hon. Gentleman has done this during a period of restored trade, when the resources of the country have been replenished to a degree they had not been for many a year. This series of financial arrangements has thrown the national finances into such confusion that it is absolutely impossible for any one to make out what is and what is not the expenditure during any one year. You have to look through all these Acts, and the greatest proof is that the Government cannot read their own Acts; they have to bring in these supplemental Estimates because they made a mistake to the amount of £300,000, and because the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the First Lord of the Admiralty were at issue whether or not that £300,000 was part of the expenditure of last year. Could there be anything more conclusive of the financial jumble and confusion than this result of the policy of the Government? I venture to say that, under the circumstances of this financial juggle and confusion, the ordinary Budget becomes a senseless document. It is open to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to swell his Budget of expenditure this year and diminish it the next as he chooses, by throwing this year's expenditure on the last, or *vice versâ*. The House, for instance, was deluded by the Budget and the Navy Estimates of last year. This sum of £350,000 ought to have been provided for, and it was not. True, it is not a very large amount, but it affords an object lesson as to the present system, upon which, when the Budget comes on, we shall have more to say. If this money has now to be provided, why does not the right hon. Gentleman propose a loan such as Lord Palmerston proposed in respect of fortifications? As is well known, in that case the sum was to be spead over a number of years by terminable annuities, and before those years expired the fortifications were acknowledged to be quite useless. So it may be in regard to this expenditure. I have thought it right on this Supplementary Vote to call attention to the state of confusion into which the finances have now been brought and to show the reason for that confusion.

*(5.10.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I do not complain of the right hon. Gentleman, as one who had once filled the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, laying down strict principles of finance, but in the remarks which he has made he has indulged in what, after all, is occasional with him—gigantic exaggeration.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Oh, no; the exaggeration is on your side.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman has applied criticisms which might be applicable on policy, namely, a vast scale to transactions on a small scale. He says that no one can understand the expenditure of the country, simply by reason, I suppose, of this extra outlay of £2,000,000 or £3,000,000. I should say that that is a specimen of his exaggeration. He has attacked our finance on two or three grounds. He has attacked it as a system of borrowing, and he has attacked it because he says it leads to confusion. But he appears to have entirely forgotten what were the grounds which prompted the Government to deal in this particular way with regard to Naval and Imperial defence. It is, perhaps, not to be regretted that the right hon. Gentleman has now given me an opportunity of reminding the Committee and the public of those reasons. The right hon. Gentleman says we might have resorted to a loan, and he instances the case of the fortifications. He considers that a loan, the repayment of which was spread over a number of years, would have been better.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I did not recommend a loan. I said it would have been more straightforward and honest, though it would still have been a bad plan.

*MR. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman means to say it would have been more straightforward and honest to borrow and to spread the payment over a long instead of a short term. I fail to see that. It would, of course, have been easy for the Government to take a loan, as suggested by the right hon. Gentleman, and extend the repayment over a long period of years. But Her Majesty's Government did not think that would be sound finance. We thought it ought to be spread over the shortest possible number of years and accordingly this expenditure was spread over seven years. The right hon. Gentleman has apparently forgotten the case of the Localisation of the Forces Bill in 1871, which is a precise precedent for the course taken on the present occasion. The right hon. Gentleman has referred to three Acts—the Imperial Defence Act, the Naval Defence Act, and the Barracks Act. I was a little surprised to hear all these Acts introduced into a Debate on a Supplemental Estimate, but I suppose I am in order in replying to the right hon. Gentleman. Then, let me tell the right hon. Gentleman that the Barracks Act is based on the precise line of the Act of 1871 or 1872. There was permanent work to be undertaken, and the Government of that day, of which I was a member, borrowed for the purpose, and did not think that permanent buildings ought to be dealt with out of the revenue of the year. Similarly the present Government has not thought that the £3,000,000 or £4,000,000, to be spent on barracks, under the Act of last Session, ought to be placed on the taxpayers of one given year. If the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby is of a different opinion, that opinion is in antagonism to the action of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian in 1871. Then as to the Naval Defence Act, the right hon. Gentleman has quoted words which I used in 1879. He was perfectly entitled to do so. But why has the Government passed this measure? Because experience has taught them that under the system of finance existing previously, ships were not built within the time in which they ought to be built, and that funds intended for shipbuilding were diverted to other purposes, such as repairs. Under the old system there was a constant shifting in the Navy Estimates, which had a most dangerous influence on the shipbuilding programme. I am bound to say, I must personally take a great portion of the responsibility for that Act, for it appeared to me that unless we laid down that a certain sum should be set aside under Act of Parliament for shipbuilding, we should never have such a Fleet as the country wants. I admit that the system of finance now adopted is more complicated than the old system, but the country will forgive the complication when, at the end of the four years over which the expenditure will be spread, it sees the ships built for which the money has been voted. The right hon. Member for Derby has quoted words of mine indicating that it is a cowardly course to borrow. But we are not borrowing. We are only regularising the expenditure. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Government are borrowing £10,000,000, but this is not a loan of £10,000,000; it is rather the regularising of an expenditure of

£10,000,000, spreading it over seven years, for every year a sum of £1,400,000 is put upon the Vote, and in this way £2,800,000 out of the £10,000,000 has already been voted, and another £1,400,000 will be put in the Estimates for this year. It cannot be said that this is borrowing the money. I must, therefore, demur to the charge brought against us by the right hon. Gentleman. This arrangement, be it observed, has not been made for the purpose of lightening taxation, but in order to secure that within a given number of years a certain number of ships shall be built. This end, I hope, we shall attain; and I again say, I feel sure the country will forgive a little complication of accounts if we succeed in doing what no former Board of Admiralty or any other Government has done. Who are responsible for the demands which the Government has had to meet? The right hon. Gentleman and his friends who did not make sufficient provision for the Fleet. I believe that the right hon. Gentleman himself said, "We have no money for guns," of which the consequence is that the present Government have had to supply them. The same thing occurred in connection with the coaling stations. In fact, within three or four years the Government have had to fortify the coaling stations, to supply the new magazine rifle, to build barracks, and to strengthen the Fleet. In these circumstances, the Government have thought it justifiable, with regard to a portion of this expenditure, to take the same course as was taken in 1871 in connection with the Localisation of the Forces Bill. The right hon. Gentleman has also spoken of Local Finance. That is a subject that would be more appropriately discussed on the Budget; but I must point out that, whereas, some years ago it was next to impossible to ascertain what liabilities we had incurred for local purposes, that department of finance has now been regularised and systematised, and will soon be intelligible to the country. But the main charge of the right hon. Gentleman is that the Government had borrowed. I answer, that so far as we have borrowed, we have followed the precedent set for us, and so far as we have withdrawn any expenditure from the control of Parliament, we have simply done so in order to secure that the shipbuilding programme of the country shall be undisturbed by any change of feeling in this or a new Parliament, and to ensure that our shipbuilding programme shall be carried out.

(5.25.) Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The right hon. Gentleman, in his closing words, referred in the most distinct manner possible to the doctrine of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, when he attacked this particular system of finance. I venture to think that a more unconstitutional doctrine was never so audaciously avowed; and this is the doctrine which the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself so courageously denounced in 1879.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I did not denounce it from the point of view the right hon. Gentleman suggests.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Surely. What was the avowal of the right hon. Gentleman? That it was expedient and Constitutional for the Government to withdraw from the control of a future House of Commons the expenditure upon Her Majesty's Navy. The right hon. Gentleman said, in effect, that he resorted to this new system, which he denounced in 1879, in order that, if his Government were superseded by a Liberal Government, the present naval policy of Ministers might not be thwarted. What more unconstitutional position could a Chancellor of the Exchequer take up? Surely the controlling authority of this House is based upon the constant, steady, annual supervision of the annual expenditure. That is the most fundamental of all constitutional doctrines; yet the right hon. Gentleman wishes to prevent a new House of Commons, that may disapprove the naval policy of his Government, from interfering with their plans, and in order to baulk the new House, and to frustrate the will and intentions of the constituencies, he resorts to this system which the right hon. Member for Derby has denounced. By his bold and audacious avowal the Chancellor of the Exchequer has shown that he must have forgotten what he said in 1879. He then said—

> "The fact was, the House had lost power as to the expenditure of the country through the introduction of this distinction between ordinary and extraordinary expenditure."

Now, the right hon. Gentleman tells us that he has adopted this new system because he wishes to deprive a future House of Commons of all control over the naval policy of the country.

*(5.29.) MR. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman is indulging in some exaggeration. I do not shrink from the just inference which may be drawn from my words; but the right hon. Gentleman does not draw the correct inference, when he says that what we did was to substitute an Act of Parliament for the estimate. We placed the item on the Consolidated Fund in order that it should not be made the subject of an annual Vote, but the control of Parliament remains. Of course, as the right hon. Gentleman knows, an Act of Parliament can be repealed. Therefore, the naval policy of the country has not been withdrawn from the control of a future House of Commons, for the right hon. Gentleman and his friends, if they should think right, will be able to repeal the Naval Defence Act. My own views may well have undergone some modification since 1879, for I have had experience of the difficulties caused in naval matters by the system ordinarily pursued. I have endeavoured to explain to the House the difficulties into which the Navy and our system of naval construction have got owing to the policy which has been pursued during the last eight or nine years. I have seen all the disasters that have resulted from that system. Sometimes it has happened that there were guns for which no ammunition was provided, and in other cases it has happened that there were ships for which no guns were provided; while with regard to the ships themselves, they have been so slowly constructed that in some cases they have been rendered practically valueless for times of emergency. I have also seen the results which have been pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt), with regard to our fortifications, where the necessary work has been spread over a long time, so that had any necessity arisen in the meantime neither ships nor fortifications would have been ready. In answer to the right hon. Gentleman, I say that if these defences are essential to the national safety, it cannot be wrong for us to depart from the ordinary practice, and to propose that the naval expenditure should be safeguarded by a permanent arrangement such as we now propose, instead of that which has hitherto been customary. Now, I confess that I have laid myself open to some of the reproaches of right hon. Gentlemen opposite. I have laid myself open to the reproach that I have in some degree lessened the control of Parliament over the expenditure for the construction of our Fleet; but I say that if the results should be that three years hence this country will have a larger Navy and a stronger Navy than it has ever had before, that our ships will be found to have been built more economically, because consecutively, by funds withdrawn from immediate Parliamentary control, and that in addition to our ships, we shall also have provided the magazine rifle and have fortified our coaling stations, I trust that the House will forgive the Chancellor of the Exchequer for having secured these results by this system of finance, which may be termed complicated, and which right hon. Gentlemen opposite may consider they are justified in denouncing as they have done, but which I still believe will be proved to be more beneficial to the country than that which has hitherto been adopted.

(5.34.) SIR W. HARCOURT: We have heard the arguments put forward by the once Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer in favour of what I call "ship-money." All the principles of the Constitution, all the control of Parliament over the National Expenditure, are thrown over by the right hon. Gentleman the Liberal Unionist Chancellor of the Exchequer. What, I ask, has become of the constitutional control of the House of Commons? The right hon. Gentleman says, "We put it into an Act of Parliament, which you can alter if you like." Yes, with the consent of the House of Lords. It is thus the control of the House of Commons over the Expenditure of the country is deliberately destroyed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and he does this because he fears a dissolution may come, and that another Government may sit in the places occupied by himself and his colleagues. That, I repeat, is the constitutional doctrine of a Chancellor of the Exchequer who was once a Liberal, and who made the speech in 1879 to which reference has already been made. Let me for a moment examine this doctrine. The policy of this House ever since the Reform Bill of 1832 has been to put upon the Votes of Parliament everything that could properly be put upon the Votes, and to take off everything that could be taken off the Consolidated Fund, in order that the control of the House of Commons might be more efficiently maintained. But now the Expenditure which has always by the Constitution of the country been expressly reserved for the control of the House of Commons—that is to say, the naval and military expenditure — is put for the first time by Her Majesty's Government upon the Consolidated Fund, so that it cannot be removed except with the consent of the House of Lords. This paltry sum of £350,000 contained in the Supplementary Estimate is as insignificant as the amount of "ship-money" itself when compared with the doctrine which is used to support it. Here we have the Chancellor of the Exchequer coming down to the House on a Monday afternoon and saying, "I have given away"—no, not given away, but, "I have filched away—filched away secretly—in a manner which the country has never previously known, and by a deliberate plan, the control of the House of Commons over the Naval Estimates, thereby placing the House in such a position that if there should be a dissolution of Parliament or a new Government who desired to alter this policy, it could not do it without the consent of the House of Lords." That is the object, and the avowed object, of the right hon. Gentleman, and the period is put at seven years, I suppose with a view to the Septennial Act, so as to make the Government perfectly safe against another Parliament or Government, which might disapprove of their proceedings, thereby saying, "Although the majority of the country and the majority of their Representatives in the House of Commons might desire another policy, we, a discredited Government, have taken care that the country, and the Government which enjoys the confidence of the country, shall not be able to pursue whatever policy they, under the circumstances, may deem fit." That is the doctrine of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that doctrine cannot be too distinctly stated in this House. I think the country will be very much surprised to see it to-morrow—quite as much surprised as I was when I heard the avowal this afternoon. I had at first thought that it had been merely the result of a blundering policy, or what the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself spoke of as a "shabby, sloppy proceeding," arising from a blunder made between two Departments over a trifle of £300,000. But it is not so. It is a totally different thing. It is the result of the deliberate and well-considered policy of the Government for the purpose of removing this money from the control of the House of Commons for a period of seven years. Let us understand exactly where we are. This policy has been as distinctly avowed and defended by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as it is possible to conceive. I know that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland, who laughs at this, is as much the advocate of a Coercion Act for this House as he is of a Coercion Act for Ireland. I am not at all surprised at him; but in what I am now saying I am appealing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who once held views on financial principles which have been established in this country for the last 100 years. I have already referred to "ship-money." There is a youthful Strafford sitting by the side of the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I am reminded that Strafford was also a Governor of Ireland in his time when, I suppose, the government of Ireland was conducted on much the same principles and policy as those of the present Chief Secretary. I should not, therefore, think of appealing to him for anything like respect for constitutional principles. Nevertheless, I hope it is not too late to vindicate and affirm the old principle of the control of the House of Commons over the Expenditure of the country, which has been deliberately attacked by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. We now know that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has by a deliberate plan endeavoured to destroy that principle.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman seems to forget that a Debate took place on this very subject on the

Naval Defence Bill, and that the very same arguments were used and fully answered, the Government being attacked on precisely the same points as are advanced at the present moment.

SIR W. HARCOURT: At any rate, I am very much surprised that we have had the avowal from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the whole policy of the Government has been deliberately adopted for the purpose of keeping the control of the naval expenditure out of hands of the House of Commons. I protest against any such doctrine. I think that this Debate is thoroughly justified, inasmuch as it has brought out before the country and the House of Commons quite clearly what is the object of the policy of the Government, namely, to destroy the control of the House of Commons over our naval expenditure, and that for seven years, whatever the country or the House of Commons may say or desire, or whatever the Government which enjoys the confidence of the country, may think Parliament has determined the matter by an Act which we cannot vary except with the consent of the House of Lords. I have always thought the principle of control by this House was accepted by both Parties; but it now appears that it is only the Liberal Party that will have to maintain for the future the doctrine of the supremacy of this House over the National Expenditure. At any rate, that doctrine is repudiated by the Party which is represented by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I had thought that the doctrine of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was sufficiently laid down in his speech of 1879; but he says he has shunted that doctrine just as he has abandoned a great deal more since that time. The doctrine which has hitherto been upheld by this House has been that, as a general rule, the money wanted to meet the expenditure of the year should be provided out of the resources of the year. There are exceptions to that rule, where the particular circumstances or exigencies may require a different course; but where it is necessary to vary the rule, the necessity ought to be frankly and fairly stated to the House. I have never yet heard any Government or Administration avow that they have deliberately adopted a plan by which, for seven years, they intended to defeat the control of the House of Commons over the Expenditure of the country, and I venture to say that I, for one, protest against this doctrine, and express a hope that when the country has had an opportunity of considering it, it will repudiate it quite as strongly as we do.

(5.44.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The right hon. Gentleman has just made one of his usual appeals to the principles of the Liberal Party; and in justification of that appeal has given us a short sketch of English History, beginning with Charles I. and coming down to our own time. But there is one principle which he seems to have entirely forgotten. I always thought it an essential principle of the Liberal Party that a practice was not to be adhered to merely because it was old, but that it was possible to re-consider even the most ancient and traditional custom when it was thought it might be amended. I have believed also that that principle was not the absolute monopoly of either Political Party, although, if it were claimed more by one Party than by the other, it was by the party to which the right hon. Gentleman belongs. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that this Debate has been sprung upon us, and that now, at the very last moment, the Tory Government, led by a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, intends to subvert the beneficial liberties of the country and to destroy one of the principles upon which the financial policy of the Government has hitherto been based. The right hon. Gentleman, who poses as a vigilant guardian of the public purse, seems to have forgotten the Debates that took place upon this subject some two or three years ago. It may aid the right hon. Gentleman to refer to those Debates, in which some very eminent colleagues of his took part, although possibly he may have taken no part in them himself. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Edinburgh (Mr. Childers) took part in them, and so, also, did the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone); and well do I recollect the constitutional views which they put forward, and which received a certain amount of support from the speech made by my noble Friend the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) from this side of the House. Therefore, to say that these questions are now for the first time sprung upon the House, and that the dark and nefarious design of the Government is only now made apparent, is to prove that the right hon. Gentleman, so far from being a careful guardian of the liberties of the House, has not taken the trouble to follow the discussions which have taken place on the subject upon which he has spoken so strongly. After all, Mr. Courtney, what the Committee have to determine is not whether the plan is subversive of the old plan, but whether the new plan is a good plan, and whether it is not justified by the facts of the case. The right hon. Gentleman said perfectly truly that the practice of voting money for an Expenditure which is to extend over more than one year is a new plan which was never thought of by our forefathers. But this is to meet a new exigency in shipbuilding. It did not take four or five years to complete a ship in the old time.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: It took more.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman is mistaken. The model of the wooden ship changed less in a century than the model of an ironclad changes now in five years. Therefore, the object of this change of policy is to meet what never existed before. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir W. Harcourt) apparently supposes that we have in mere lightness of heart adopted this new method. He must know, if he has followed the policy of naval construction during the last 10 years, that it was forced upon the Government by the evils which were brought to their notice, and the right hon. Gentleman did not show throughout the whole course of his speech that he had the slightest appreciation of what those necessities are. The Government adopted this plan, to which the House gave their deliberate sanction, with the view of carrying out a complete and economical programme of shipbuilding; and before we can abandon that plan, we must have much stronger arguments than the flimsy and shadowy constitutional pretences brought forward by the right hon. Gentleman. Of course, if the Government were to withdraw from the consideration of the Committee money to be expended on a policy to be carried out within the year, that would be very gratuitously violating the traditions of Parliament. The Army expenditure is of that nature. But the peculiarity of modern shipbuilding and modern fortifications is this: that alterations of design are so rapid, and inventions are pressed forward at such a speed, that, if you followed the old plan of taking a long time to build, your ships would be more costly and less efficient. Are you prepared, in order to lay the ghosts of Charles I. and Hampden, to have worse ships under the old plan than you will gain under the new plan? Let the right hon. Gentlemen show that our plan does not come up to the naval necessities of the case, and he will show us ample reason for abandoning that plan. They do not do that. They rely upon these Parliamentary practices which are perfectly justifiable in dealing with ordinary matters, but which are not justifiable in an expenditure on ironclads, which take years to build.

(5.50.) MR. J. MORLEY: I think the right hon. Gentleman was not in his place when the remark fell from the Chancellor of the Exchequer which gave rise to this discussion. Upon the right hon. Gentleman's last remarks I would ask him one plain question. If you wanted £4,000,000 last year, why did you not ask Parliament to vote it then and there? Perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer will give a plain answer to that when the opportunity arises. What the Chief Secretary has just been saying about the Navy of the country is really beside the mark. First of all, and as a matter of fact, I do not believe the First Lord of the Admiralty would say that a ship takes longer to build now than it did in 1879, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer laid down these sound doctrines. But the point we want to get at is the avowal made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Government adopted this policy not because ships takes longer to build, or from any point of view of that kind, but because, as he said, "We might be superseded by gentlemen on the other side of the House in the Government, and we want to anticipate that risk of supersession; and, therefore, in fact, we take out of you, the House of Commons, the power of saying what should or should not be done."

The Chief Secretary was not here at the moment that avowal was made, but I doubt that he would defend that principle. What is the Chief Secretary's argument after all, taking it for what it is worth? It assumes that the House of Commons are likely to be so blind to all the naval necessities of the country, or to the conditions of naval construction, that they will deliberately waste and throw away what has been done by the preceding Government. The Chief Secretary has not dealt with our comments upon the proposition of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which stands absolutely accepted by the whole Government, namely, that the Government of the day by this policy deliberately intended, and acted with that view, to take from the House of Commons the power of altering this policy or of checking an expenditure in which the House of Lords is to join.

*(5.54.) Mr. GOSCHEN: It would appear that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle, as well as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, does not remember the Debates which took place on the Naval Defence Bill. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian discussed this very objection to the Bill.

Mr. J. MORLEY: That is what I said.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby has asserted that this was not discussed.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I beg your pardon. I did not say the objection had not been taken; it has always been our objection. But what I said was that it had never been avowed before that it was intended to defeat the will of the country and of future Parliaments. It has never been said before, and never been answered, that it was in order to defeat the Government or the Parliament elected by the country.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman has referred to future Parliaments. Why could not a future Parliament repeal the Act?

Sir W. HARCOURT: The House of Commons.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman ought to be more careful in his language. He spoke of Parliament.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The House of Lords is not dissolved; the House of Commons is.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: The argument was used on the last occasion, just as it is used now, but Parliament decided upon a certain programme. It settled that certain ships should be built and finished, and the money raised for them in a certain way. Was it desirable, after this solemn resolve, that we should be exposed to the contingency that a future Government—I did not speak of a future Parliament—should interfere with the continuity of shipbuilding for four or five years? Our whole argument, our whole policy, was this: that precautions should be taken by Act to secure continuity for our programme for five years. That is the great crime with which we stand charged. We pointed out that no guns had been supplied, or, if they were, that there was no ammunition for them, and that the ships were far longer building than was necessary. ["No, no!"] We have it on record, and it cannot be denied that frequently the Admiralty changed the plans for a portion of some vessel, and that delayed its construction, while money that was voted for building was devoted to repairs. We considered it wiser to have continuous building, and I do think the right hon. Gentleman has exaggerated the scope of our proposal. Of course, the new Parliament will be able to deal with this as with any other Acts. The whole crime, as I understand, is that we have put into an Act what we formerly brought before Committee of Supply.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Our charge is that you have destroyed the control of the House of Commons over public expenditure.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: Then my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, when he passed the Mobilisation of Forces Act, 1871, destroyed control over that amount of expenditure, just as we are said to be destroying control now. How does the right hon. Gentleman get out of that difficulty? The sanction of expenditure by an Act of Parliament has been done continually. It is done in every instance where there is a loan. The right hon. Gentleman says we have destroyed the control of the House of Commons. That is to say, nothing is to be done by loan. I admit to the full with the right hon. Gentleman that the control of Parliament ought to be maintained, as far as possible, but there are cases where it is advisable to proceed by legislation, and we think this is a case.

*(5.58.) Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): As Her Majesty's Government have fallen back on the plea of administration as an excuse, I wish to draw attention to this one fact, that in a very important speech delivered in 1888 the First Lord of the Admiralty, I think, in introducing the Naval Defence Bill, said the building of the *Trafalgar* had been shortened by at least a year and a-half, involving a saving of £75,000 to the Exchequer. This improvement in administration was therefore secured before the adoption of this procedure to which Her Majesty's Government have had recourse. The contention which has been laid before us, especially by the Chief Secretary, shows very small attention to the facts as to the construction of various ships. I was astounded at what the Chancellor of the Exchequer said with regard to guns and ammunition, and other matters of administration, which can be dealt with without the unconstitutional procedure which has been so justly and rightly denounced by my right hon. Friends.

(5.59.) Sir W. PLOWDEN (Wolverhampton, W.): I think we ought to have some explanation of this sum of £350,000 extra expenditure in respect of steam vessels. The First Lord and his advisers, when they framed their Estimates, must have had a very accurate knowledge of triple-expansion engines, and they ought to have been able to frame them in such a manner as to avoid this extra expenditure of £350,000 being asked for. I would ask the First Lord whether there is any difference between the conduct of these triple-expansion engines in Her Majesty's Service and the conduct of such engines in the Merchant Service? If there is no difference, why are not the Estimates properly framed?

(6.3) Sir W. HARCOURT: I should like to ask the First Lord one question. He will remember that the most important part of his statement last year related to the proposal to reserve a large number of ships which would be available on an emergency at very short

notice. If I remember rightly, the large ships were to be available at once —the coastguard ships in 48 hours, and the principal part of the Naval Reserve in five days or a week. I think the noble Lord said, on the 1st of July 1890, that these ships would be all ready and available for war purposes, if they were wanted, within a less space of time than a week. I would ask him whether his expectation has been fulfilled, whether the vessels would be able to put to sea within a week, and whether they are all available for war purposes? I would also ask him whether he would have any objection to lay on the Table a Return showing the present condition of the mobilisation, and how far the actual condition of things corresponds with the expectations the noble Lord held out last year. Two or three days ago I saw in the *Times* newspaper a statement that none of these expectations had been realised, that hardly any of the vessels of the First-Class Reserve could be brought forward in a short space of time; that many of the vessels mentioned would take a year or more to bring forward; and that, in point of fact, the scheme of mobilisation on which all this extraordinary expenditure has been incurred has not been carried out. The writer of the article to which I have referred says that some of the Reserve ships are old wooden vessels, and some of the so-called ironclads are of so old a type that, practically speaking, they ought not to be regarded as available.

(6.7.) Lord G. HAMILTON: I shall be very glad to give the right hon. Gentleman the information he asks for. Last year I announced that it was intended that the large ships should be made available for service within twelve hours. That has been done. I said it was intended to convert the Channel Squadron into a homogeneous squadron of modern battle-ships. That has been done. As regards the Coastguard ships, all of them are in a condition to be ready for action within 48 hours. The criticisms of the writer in the *Times*, to which the right hon. Gentleman has alluded, were made in reference to ships in what is called the First Reserve. I read the article, and it seemed to me a very clear and business-like article, but the writer committed two mistakes. He talked of a great many ships as obsolete—and it is the fashion of a large number of people to say that a great portion of the British Navy is obsolete. But such persons have not mastered the fact that the question whether a ship is obsolete or not does not depend on the date at which it is built, but on the ships against which it will have to be used. If any other test were adopted, a large portion of the Foreign Navies would disappear. A certain number of our ships came back from the manœuvres of last year with very small and trifling defects, and these defects have not, owing to the pressure of work, been made good, so that technically a number of ships are still outside the First Class Reserve. I have, however, talked the question over with the Controller of the Navy, and the right hon. Gentleman will be glad to hear that practically all these vessels can be ready for Commission within a week. I have no objection to give the Return if the right hon. Gentleman wishes it. I know the right hon. Gentleman's interest in the Navy, but I wish every Chancellor of the Exchequer had had the advantage which my right hon. Friend the present Chancellor of the Exchequer has had of being at the head of the Admiralty for two or three years. Because when a right hon. Gentleman has had that experience, he finds out that a good many regulations to which the ordinary Treasury official attaches importance, as insuring economy, works exactly the opposite way. The present discussion has all originated on a Supplementary Estimate, and the right hon. Gentleman and his friends charge against the Government that they wish to deprive the House of Commons of its legitimate control over the national expenditure. Now, if it had not been for the Naval Defence Act, this large Supplementary Estimate never would have come before the House at all, because the Admiralty would have been able to meet it out of the savings on the other Votes; and it is because those savings are appropriated by Act of Parliament that this Supplementary Estimate comes before the House at all, and the House therefore has an opportunity of expressing its opinion which, but for the Naval Defence Act, it would not have had. The Debate has originated on the question whether or not it is wise that unexpended balances should be carried to the credit of next year. My right hon. Friend does not consent to those balances being carried forward, as contrary to accepted financial principles; but under the Naval Defence Act the Admiralty practically should be able to build these ships at a very small percentage over the original Estimate.

(6.12.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I do not quite follow the noble Lord in saying that, but for the Naval Defence' Act, it would not have been necessary to take this Supplementary Vote, but I wish to point out, in answer to the statement made by himself and the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the system adopted under the Naval Defence Act is likely to have the effect of hastening the construction of ships, that experience is rather in the opposite direction. I find that in 1888-9, £300,000, which had been provided for by Parliament, was not expended in the year, and that in the current year £200,000 has been unexpended on shipbuilding in the dockyards.

LORD G. HAMILTON: That is for armament.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: That is, I presume, for the ships. In respect to shipbuilding by contract we find that no less than £600,000 is unexpended during the present year. By these amounts, therefore, vessels will be slower in building than was anticipated: in other words, the system adopted under the Naval Defence Act is having no better effect than the old system, in hastening ships. On the contrary, I believe the construction of ships is being delayed even to a greater extent than under the old system.

*DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I understand none of this money is intended to pay any of the expenses connected with the expedition to Witu in November last.

LORD G. HAMILTON: This is all for stores.

MR. DUFF (Banffshire): Reference has been made to the statement in the *Times* with regard to the delay in the building of new vessels. I should like to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether it is correct, as stated, that a great many of the new vessels, especially those built by contract, are two or three knots slower than was contracted for.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The hon. Gentleman will find the information in my statement. In certain instances there was a falling off in speed of about a knot.

MR. DUFF: I do not want to raise the question at length now. If the noble Lord is not prepared to go into the matter at this moment I will ask him a question on the Shipbuilding Vote.

Vote agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS, 1890-91 (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES).

CLASS II.

2. £500, Supplementary, Colonial Office.

(6.20.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I do not desire to raise the whole question of Colonial Policy on this Supplementary Vote, but I think I am entitled to ask for some information on important events that are now taking place. Two or three days ago there appeared in the *Times* an article in very large type headed "Outcome of the Negotiations regarding South Africa." I should like to know if the statements in the article were authentic.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member ought to defer raising such a question until the Colonial Office Vote is reached. The only item in the present Vote is for telegrams.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Yes, Sir; but I submit that the sending out of telegrams is a very important matter.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is quite entitled to ask as to any telegraphic charge, but not to discuss general questions of Colonial Policy.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Then I should like to know whether any part of the telegrams for which a charge is made in this Vote had reference to the passing of the Act giving Responsible Government to Natal? I am obliged to abide by your ruling, Sir, but I am afraid that ruling will tend to the discussion being confined in very narrow limits.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I think I might be allowed to ask this financial question: whether any of these telegrams refer to the Chartered Company of South Africa, because, if so, I imagine we might raise the question whether such telegrams ought to be paid for by the Chartered Company or by the Imperial Government?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Chartered Company pay for their own telegrams.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No doubt, they do; but I apprehend that if telegrams refer to matters concerning the Chartered Company, for instance to the enlistment of persons like Colonel Carrington for the Chartered Company, the Chartered Company ought to pay for them. This is important because we have speculative companies established in South Africa, and I notice that little by little we are being called upon to pay sums in respect of them. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will clearly explain whether any of the telegrams apply directly or indirectly to the action of Colonel Carrington, or to any other English official, with regard to the Chartered Company—in fact, whether if the Chartered Company had not been in existence these telegrams would have been sent at all.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: The Vote to some extent arises from the increase of questions in this House, necessitating inquiries to be made by telegram in all parts of the globe.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I think we may assume that the inquiries were on the subject of questions asked in the House, and therefore, probably, you, Sir, will rule that we may raise a Debate on those questions.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Can the right hon. Gentleman say how many telegrams were sent to South Africa?

*BARON H. DE WORMS: It is quite impossible to say.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): How much of the charge is due to questions put in the House? It seems to me the Colonial Office are entirely ignorant of colonial matters, unless questions are put to them by hon. Members, because when we ask questions they immediately telegraph, utterly regardless of the expense. The ignorance displayed by the Colonial Office shows the great necessity of hon. Members putting questions across the floor of the House. The best the right hon. Gentleman can do is to promise us a return of the cost of the different telegrams and distinguish between the telegrams he has sent in the ordinary course, and those he has sent when stirred up by hon. Members. I shall certainly move to report Progress, and take a Division against the Vote unless the right hon. Gentleman will give us some information, some rough or approximate estimate, as to the amount under this head due to questions asked in this House.

*(6.30.) BARON H. DE WORMS: The hon. and gallant Gentleman must be aware that it is absolutely impossible for me to give such information at a moment's notice, but if he will put down a Question I will give all information I can obtain.

(6.31.) MR. LABOUCHERE: But the right hon. Gentleman has told us that the increase in this item of expenditure is mainly due to the questions asked by hon. Members in this House, so surely he must have in his mind some idea of the approximate cost of telegrams on this account. The expenditure on telegrams is increased by £500, and the right hon. Gentleman, putting it rather as a slur upon the conduct of hon. Members, says, this expense has been mainly caused by questions asked here. But we repudiate responsibility for any increase of the kind. We, in the exercise of our undoubted right, put questions to Ministers on public matters, and we naturally suppose that the public Department concerned can supply the information we desire, but we have never supposed that the Colonial Office is so absolutely ignorant on colonial matters that to answer a simple question they have to telegraph to the Antipodes.

(6.33.) DR. CLARK: It will be observed there is another Vote for £1,750 for telegrams for the High Commissioner alone. I should like to know if any portion of this was used for South Africa?

*MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I really think an answer is due to us with respect to this great increase in cost of telegrams. The right hon. Gentleman puts this extra charge as mainly due to getting answers to questions we, in the exercise of the privilege of Members, put in this House, and then, being further challenged, he says it is utterly impossible for him to say what amount is due to the cause he has mentioned. But surely he has some approximate idea of the number of questions asked, or telegrams sent? It is hardly business-like to ask us to pass a vote like this, the right hon. Gentleman only saying, in an airy manner, the increase is due to questions in the House. Surely he can give us an approximate idea of the questions upon which he makes his statement?

*(6.34.) BARON H. DE WORMS: I am sure the hon. Gentleman does not wish to misrepresent me; I have not refused the information. I have explained that I am not prepared with it at the moment. I said that of this extra expenditure a great deal was due to receiving answers to questions asked in this House. The hon. Gentleman knows that it continually happens that upon the Notice Question being answered an hon. Member supplements it by asking that the information desired may be telegraphed for, and it would be considered extremely discourteous if I refused to obtain information in that manner. I can call to mind an instance when the Western Australia Constitution Bill was before the House in which a telegram was sent to West Australia, and the rate for such telegrams is 8s. a word. Several times during those Western Australia Government Debates the Government were asked to telegraph for information.

(6.36.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): The ordinary Estimates for the year included a large sum for telegrams, and this is a Supplementary Vote. Reasons for the increase must have been sent to the Treasury; can my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury tell us upon what information the Treasury sanctioned this additional Estimate?

(6.37.) MR. H. HEATON (Canterbury): I should like to ask the Under Secretary for the Colonies whether his statement, that this increase is chiefly due to questions asked in this House, is based upon information supplied by permanent officials at the Colonial Office, because my information in regard to these telegrams is of a totally different character?

*MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I would reiterate the question of my right hon. Friend the Member for Wolverhampton. Does the Under Secretary mean that this large increase is mainly due to the increase of questions on colonial matters? I do not think that such a statement is in accordance with the general knowledge of hon. Members, and I do not think the right hon. Gentleman has, during the course of the Session, been called upon to answer an unusually large number of colonial questions. This sum of £500 is a Supplementary Estimate. Will the Secretary to the Treasury say that when this increase of 14 or 15 per cent. on the original estimate was asked for the reason given was the unexpected number of questions requiring to be answered by means of the telegraph?

*(6.38.) THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): Perhaps I may be allowed to say a word on the subject, and before I do so let me say that my right hon. Friend had no intention of making this increase any ground for reproach on hon. Members for asking questions. I am asked, what statement was made to the Treasury which induced the Treasury to sanction this Supplementary Estimate? and to this I have to say that the original Estimate—which, as hon. Members are aware, was £3,500—was represented to us in December as being insufficient, there having been a great deal of telegraphing during the first nine months of the year. Having regard to the fact that the Estimate would almost certainly be exceeded, we thought it better to provide for another £500 to meet the expenses that might be incurred in the latter part of the year. It may be that this amount will not be expended; it may be that only £100 will be spent. I do not anticipate that the whole sum will be required, but I hope the Committee will agree that we do right in providing for contingencies that may arise.

(6.39.) MR. H. H. FOWLER: If this answer had been given earlier I do not think there would have been any difference of opinion. This is just the information we required; but when the Under Secretary put the increase upon such a novel ground that this House was responsible, he must not be surprised that objection was taken.

DR. CLARK: But may I ask what is the source of this: there is another Vote for £1,750?

Mr. Buchanan

MR. JACKSON: That comes on a later Vote for the Colonial Service. That is a Vote by itself.

(6.40.) MR. H. HEATON: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered my question as to the source of the information that the excess on the Vote is due to questions asked in the House. Is it derived from the permanent officials in the office? because my information is directly contrary to that.

Vote agreed to.

3. £10 Supplementary, Bankruptcy Department, Board of Trade.

(6.41.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I should like to have some information as to this expenditure. Though the nominal sum is £10, the expenses are really £700. I am very glad to find the Government find it necessary to spend £700 to give effect to the Companies Winding Up Act, and hope it may be the means, under that Act, of preventing those frauds such as we find daily brought to light in the Courts of Law in connection with the management of Joint Stock Companies. I should like to know what measures have been taken for the efficient working of the Act and the bringing to justice those who come within the clutches of the law.

*(6.42.) MR. JACKSON: Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to explain that. The only reason it is necessary to take a Supplementary Vote at all is that the Companies Winding Up Act has been passed since the Estimates were framed, and the Board of Trade could not incur any expenditure else, the expenditure being limited to the Bankruptcy Department. It is necessary to take this Vote as a matter of regularity and routine. My right hon. Friend anticipates that £700 may be required during the current financial year, and the fees are expected to cover that amount. The hon. Member may rely upon full effect being given to the Act.

Vote agreed to.

4. £455 Supplementary, Friendly Societies' Registry.

(6.45.) DR. CLARK: May I ask, is anything being done in reference to the Report of the Select Committee on this question, which made certain recommendations? There have been complaints that certain classes of tables, for which an expenditure of £10,000 has been incurred, are not ready. I understand the Government intend to bring in a measure; there seems to be some change pending. I should like to have some information.

*(6.45.) MR. JACKSON: The hon. Member is quite right. The Committee did make certain recommendations, and subsequently a Departmental Committee went thoroughly into all the questions of staff and recommended certain alterations, and it is to meet the increased expenditure that the Supplementary Estimate is necessary. The £300 is to meet expenditure in the current financial year which was necessary upon these tables. These have been in preparation for some years, and it was estimated the total cost would be £10,000 for 10 years. They ought to have been completed this year, but it was found they could not be completed, but it is expected they will be completed next year. Rather than delay the work, and to get the advantage of the tables at the earliest moment, we sanctioned an expenditure of £1,000 in excess of the original estimate. The work has taken 10 years, and will be of great advantage to Friendly Societies.

Vote agreed to.

5. £20,000, Supplementary, Mint, including coinage.

6. £1,150, Supplementary, Works and Public Buildings Office.

CLASS III.

7. Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £200, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1891, for the Salaries and Expenses of the Police Courts of London and Sheerness."

(6.49.) MR. LABOUCHERE: Once more I must raise the question whether the expenses of Police Courts in London and the suburbs should be borne on the Imperial taxation or should be borne by London itself. We have Police Courts in the towns we represent, and in these towns most assuredly the inhabitants pay for them. In London that is not the practice. This practice of placing these expenses on the Estimates has, I imagine, grown up from there being a Central Court at Bow Street, where international matters come up for consideration. Of the payment of a small sum on that account I should not complain, but why we should be called upon to pay for Police Courts at Sheerness, Woolwich, Greenwich, Wandsworth, and other places I do not understand. Is there any more reason why we should pay for the Courts at Woolwich or Sheerness any more than we should pay for the Courts at Derby or Northampton, or any other town? This matter has been frequently raised, and I have sometimes very nearly beaten the Government upon it, though at other times I have been much further from success, but there always has been a protest made. I raised it also on the question of the expense of building the Courts. Now, if we only look in the newspapers we see that the cases in these Courts, making an occasional exception at Bow Street, where there may be an extradition case to decide, are as much local to London as the proceedings in any of our provincial towns concern the Municipal Police of those towns. As I cannot find a sufficient reason for this Vote being put upon the Estimates I shall divide against the Vote.

(6.52.) SIR W. HARCOURT: This is a very old controversy. My right hon. Friend (Mr. H. H. Fowler) has raised it over and over again, and the only defence which could be made in past times was that London had no municipal representation, and, therefore, this Charge was put upon the Estimates. With the extension of municipal government to London the Charge is no longer defensible. This was fully recognised in the Bill I introduced for the better government of London, this Charge being placed upon the inhabitants of London. Now that London has a County Council, I cannot see how this Charge can in justice to other Municipal Bodies be made a national Charge, and I hope we shall have an undertaking that in future this Charge shall be transferred from the Exchequer to local finance. If not, I shall certainly vote with my hon. Friend as a protest, for undoubtedly this should be a matter for the constituted Local Authority—the London County Council.

*(6.54.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): Of course, this is a Supplementary Vote, and the House has already sanctioned the principle with the ordinary Estimates for the year. I understand the hon. Gentleman to draw a distinction between the Courts in London and those at Sheerness, Chatham, and Woolwich, and proposes to divide against the Charge in relation to the latter places.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No; I said I was opposed to the whole of the Vote, though perhaps it might be possible for the Treasury to pay a certain sum—say £500—annually to defray the costs arising at Bow Street, in respect to magisterial investigations in relation to international matters. I can understand the reasonableness of that.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY: I understood the hon. Gentleman to take exception to the Charge for Sheerness and other places. Of course, at Chatham, Woolwich, and Sheerness there are large increases of the population owing to the Government dockyards and military stations, and this involves a greater demand for summary jurisdiction. As to whether the London Police Courts generally ought to be supported from local resources or the Imperial Treasury, that is a subject for abstract discussion. The maintenance of good order in the Metropolis is a matter of Imperial as well as of local concern, and in passing the main Estimates for the current financial year Parliament has sanctioned the principle at present obtaining.

(6.57.) MR. H. H. FOWLER: I venture to think this has ceased to be an abstract question, and now assumes a concrete shape. When this question was raised some 10 years ago the answer given by the then Secretary to the Treasury was that it was impossible that the question could be raised with any advantage until London was invested with municipal government, and a pledge was given, which has been repealed since, that when London had her own municipal government the expenses of the Courts should be defrayed as they are in all other great towns of the United Kingdom. Of course, I should be out of order in raising the general question, but I can promise the Government that it will be raised when the Estimates come forward. I confine my remarks to the Supplementary Estimate and the increase for the salary of a clerk at Sheerness. The Under Secretary tells us that the good order of the Metropolis is a matter of Imperial concern, and that the nation should support the Courts at Sheerness because there are large Government works there, and the population is increased by Government *employés;* but would the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary to the Treasury countenance such an argument on behalf of Liverpool or Portsmouth or Plymouth or other of our maritime ports? This is the only opportunity which the Committee will have of dividing on these Votes, which were passed *en masse* at the end of last Session, in too great a hurry for Parliament to approve or disapprove of the principle under discussion. Unless the Government can give us some more encouraging answer in respect to the future Estimates I shall go into the Lobby with my hon. Friend.

(6.58.) MR. LABOUCHERE: The Under Secretary says it is the duty of the Imperial Government to provide specially for the Police Courts at Sheerness and elsewhere, because there happens to be a large amount of Government dockyard labour. But is that the case with Plymouth or Pembroke or Portsmouth? No; there is no pretence that the Government labour entails heavier local expenditure on the Courts. We know perfectly well that people like to have these Government establishments. The populations of garrison and dockyard towns should, above all others, pay for the local administration of justice, because the existence of the Government establishments brings so much trade to the localities.

(6.59.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I quite agree that London should pay for its own Police Courts, and I think the time has come for making the change, but I do not know that the right opportunity offers itself upon a Supplementary Estimate. It does seem to me, though I do not always approve of the action of the London County Council, that that is the authority to be entrusted with the duty of raising the money for this expenditure, and on another occasion I shall support a proposal for transferring this Charge to the Local Authority.

*(7.0.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I confess I am not disposed to say there are any very strong arguments why London should be treated differently from any other town, and I think if the whole thing were to be commenced *de novo* the Committee would be disposed to agree with my hon. Friend. But this is a Charge which for many reasons has been long thrown on the Estimates. It may be desirable at some future time to go into the whole question of London finance as compared with that of other towns, but it must not be assumed by the Committee that because this particular Charge is thrown upon the Estimates, London is in a very much better financial position than other towns as regards its relations with the Exchequer. In the arrangements that were made under the Local Government Act London was placed at a disadvantage as compared with every other part of the United Kingdom. I have not the figures by me, but I believe I am correct in saying that, whereas the relief that was given generally throughout the country was something over 3½d. in the £1, the relief which was given to London was under 2d. in the £1. If there were to be a re-adjustment of the settlement, London would, therefore, have more to gain by re-adjustment than it would lose.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Although it is no doubt true that the whole question was gone into carefully when the County Councils were created, still this is a matter which should stand on its own footing. Of course, to tie a question of this kind on to any re-adjustment of the whole system would be practically to defeat the course of justice. I am not at all confident that those who are the recipients of the bounty of the right hon. Gentleman have any reason to be thankful for it. In the parish in which I live in the country, I inquired what the effect of the benevolence of the right hon. Gentleman had been, and I found that the rates had been raised 4d. in the £1.

MR. BARTLEY: On a point of Order, I beg to ask whether this is relevant to the Vote?

SIR W. HARCOURT: I am answering what the right hon. Gentleman has said.

THE CHAIRMAN: It is not in Order.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then I hope I may be allowed in one sentence to answer the right hon. Gentleman by saying I traverse the statement that London has lost under this system as compared with the rest of the country. I have observed an ominous silence on the part of the Secretary to the Treasury on this question, and he is the man we really ought to hear, because he is the vindicator of the public purse in this matter. He knows very well that the public purse is being robbed as it ought not to be robbed; and though he will not speak in opposition to the Vote, I hope he will enter the Division Lobby against it.

(7.5.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 143; Noes 75.—(Div. List, No. 80.)

CLASS IV.

8. £190, Supplementary, London University.

(7.15.) MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I should like to have some explanation of the increase in this Vote.

*MR. JACKSON: There has been a slight increase in the expenditure owing to the fact that there have been more candidates for examination, and that there have had to be more examiners. The increased expenditure, however, has been more than covered by the additional fees received.

(7.18.) MR. CONYBEARE: Owing to a policy adopted not only by the present Government but by their predecessors, and in fact by all Governments, the books in these cases are of no value. The money is not required; still, it has to be spent. I have seen most curious entries about some Departments, and it comes to this: that when the money is voted they are bound to find somebody to receive it. The money is run away with in a most mysterious manner, and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman for an assurance that the fact that money is voted does not necessarily imply that it must all be spent.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Have we a guarantee from the right hon. Gentleman that there is no sort of religious test upon any person whatsoever in seeking to pass an examination at the London University?

*(7.20.) MR. JACKSON: Yes; certainly.

DR. CLARK: I notice that a portion of this Vote is for buildings. May I ask if the Government are considering the advisability of having a University for all London?

THE CHAIRMAN: That is quite outside the question of this Vote.

DR. CLARK: There is an item of extra cost in respect of new buildings.

THE CHAIRMAN: But that question is quite outside the scope of the Vote.

(7.21.) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): We always appreciate the extremely nice way in which the right hon. Gentleman answers questions, but I never was so surprised as I was just now to learn from him that, practically speaking, we have defective book-keeping in respect of the fees received in connection with examinations. We asked the right hon. Gentleman what was the reason for the increased expense under the Vote, and he says it is in consequence of increased examinations; and he supplements it by saying that the increased examinations bring in an increase of fees, so that there is a balance in favour of the Department. Then he tells us that the Vote is asked for in consequence of the extraordinary system of book-keeping of the Department. That seems to me rather ridiculous. The right hon. Gentleman belongs to one of the most important Departments of the State—the Department having charge of the public money—and I really think he should try and bring about some modification of this system which he tells us himself he takes exception to. The Committee ought to impress upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of doing this. If the right hon. Gentleman can demonstrate to us a little more plainly why this money is asked for we shall be glad. If it is not really wanted why ask for it?

(7.24.) DR. CLARK: The Government will make £136 this year by the London University. Under the head "a" we are told that it is caused by an increased number of theoretical examinations and by insufficient accommodation for University building, and there is an addition under the head "b" for examinations in physics. Under the circumstances—as the University of London is a source of gain to the State and the Government are asking us for new buildings—I think we ought to have some scheme brought forward for making the London University suitable for the work it has in hand.

*(7.26.) MR. JACKSON: We have tried for some time past to do that. These examinations are held at particular times, and temporary accommodation has to be obtained, which involves the necessity of hiring rooms. The Vote is in consequence of an increased number of candidates and a corresponding increase of examiners. They have rendered increased accommodation necessary. The receipts in fees are estimated at £700 more than they were last year. It was not my intention to convey the impression that the system at present adopted was bad, because it is quite obvious that if the total cost grows there should be power given by the House to provide for that additional expenditure. The original amount was £3,647, but it was found necessary to spend £3,778. The system of book-keeping adopted is a good one.

Vote agreed to.

9. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £11,484, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for certain Charges connected with West and South Africa."

*(7.27.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I desire to take exception to the item of £600 for the Anglo-French Mission to settle the boundary of Gambia. I would suggest that we should do away with this expense by getting rid of Gambia altogether. There has been a good deal of talk about the place, and it has been clearly demonstrated that it is of no use to us, being surrounded and enclosed by French territory. It is a sort of thorn in the side of the French in Africa. We have what I may call a "roughness" with the French in Newfoundland, and they are dissatisfied with something we are doing in Egypt; therefore I think it would be a good thing to throw a little oil on the waters by handsomely presenting France with this colony. Mention was made of this question in a letter which appeared in the *Daily Graphic*, signed "F. Buxton," and it appeared to many of us that there

might be a great deal of truth in that gentleman's statements. I have noticed also that a constituent of my own has described the state of affairs in these colonies in West Africa. He tells us that the people in the French Colonies there are God-fearing Mahommedans who do not drink spirits, and that their places are comparatively healthy. In the British colonies he found a different state of things existing. The people are dirty and degraded, and they consume enormous quantities of drink. That is unfortunately encouraged or permitted by us, and tends to the insanitary or degraded condition of these colonies. Under the circumstances, I will not move the reduction of this Vote, but I would suggest to Her Majesty's Government the great advantage of giving up or trading away Gambia to the French. I hope it may be possible on some future occasion to get rid of this unnecessary and inconvenient colony.

*(7.32.) BARON H. DE WORMS: Sir' I am sure the hon. Gentleman will not wish me to consider the expediency of giving up to France territory which we are now engaged in delimiting. If the hon. Gentleman looks at the Agreement of the 10th August, 1889, he will see by Article V. we have the right of nominating Commissioners to make such special survey as might be necessary to establish the line of demarcation between the English and the French territory. This sum of £600 is simply for the purpose of paying the Commissioners who were engaged in the delimitation of the boundaries. The delimitation of a portion of the boundaries, from Lagos to Porto Novo, has been successfully performed by an English and a French officer. At present the Commissioners are engaged in the delimitation of Gambia and Sierra Leone, the geography of which is very difficult. The delimitation is being carefully carried out in order to prevent the possibility of future dispute. It was decided to appoint officers who were capable of making a survey, and Royal Engineer officers, with a staff of non-commissioned officers and men, were appointed. It is to pay a proportion of the expenses of these officers and men that the £600 is now asked for. We divide the expense with the colony, which provides, in addition, a local transport, carriers, interpreters, and an escort. I may say that the colony is also at the expense of providing an additional outfit. The hon. Gentleman also referred to some letters from a person named Buxton, giving, from his own experience, a terrible account of Sierra Leone; and he said that he thought there was much truth in that person's statements.

*SIR G. CAMPBELL: I could have quoted other letters to a similar effect.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: This person, named Buxton, went out to the Gambia to find a Government appointment. He found none, and went on to Sierra Leone. He could not pay his hotel bill, and was turned into the streets. Then the residents got up a subscription for him, and sent him back to England after he had been in the colony for a day or two. Soon after his return he brought out a flaming prospectus for carrying a railway across the Sahara. If the hon. Gentleman possessed the information which I have about Mr. Buxton I do not think he would attach any importance whatever to his letters in the *Daily Graphic.*

*SIR G. CAMPBELL: I do not attach importance to anonymous letters in newspapers, but still I should like to know whether there is this drunkenness in the colonies.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: I think I can give the hon. Gentleman the assurance that the picture is very highly coloured and very much overdrawn.

*(7.37.) MR. BUCHANAN: I desire to call the attention of the House to the item of £5,000, a moiety of the deficit to be granted in aid of Swaziland. As to the agreement with Swaziland, what has practically been done is that we have entered into a joint Government of Swaziland with the Transvaal, and the statement of Sir Francis de Winton that there is no finality about the arrangement is confirmed by the resolution of the Transvaal Republic—that the joint agreement is a transition measure. I perfectly allow that the hands of the Government and of the Prime Minister were forced in this country by those who were interested in various financial enterprises in Swaziland. With regard to the financial aspect of the question, Sir F. de Winton, in his Report, says that nearly

all the concessions are in the hands of the South African Republic. The concessions are not mining concessions, but concessions of revenue and of Customs Duties, already made to individuals, and purchased by the Government of the South African Republic. As far as I understand no advance has been raised as to the possibility of buying up these concessions. Sir F. de Winton puts down the estimated expenditure for police and Government at £22,500, and he estimates the Revenue at £5,000. The estimated deficit, therefore, comes to £17,500. I may say that in the Estimates for the ensuing year there is a charge of £7,000 for Swaziland, which is an estimate made by the High Commissioner. This sum is due under the Convention, which says that any deficiency shall be duly certified. I asked the right hon. Gentleman a few days ago whether there had been any audit of the accounts or any certification of the deficit. The right hon. Gentleman replied that the rules of the audit of accounts, which were provided by an Article of the Convention, had not yet been received for South Africa, nor could the deficit be certified until the close of the year, on the 31st inst. The right hon. Gentleman also stated that the revenue derived from Swaziland was £1,347, as against the £5,000 estimated by Sir F. de Winton. That £1,347 is only for six months, so that the revenue for the year would be £3,700 instead of £5,000. The expenditure estimated by Sir F. de Winton comes to £22,500, so that we shall have a very much larger deficit next year. It appears, therefore, that this is only the first demand, and that in all probability we shall have before us a continuous and increasing demand for the purpose of supporting the Government of Swaziland. We may have a continuously increasing demand, and, therefore, I think it is only right that the House of Commons should take note of the first appearance of this very serious charge upon the revenues of this country. We know very well what happened in regard to Bechuanaland, where the expenses incurred had to be borne by the Home Government. The cost was at first estimated as only a small matter, but it went on increasing from year to year, until at last it amounted to £110,000 and £120,000 a year. Undoubtedly, considering the difficulty we shall be under in administering this country, and in attempting to do so in partnership with the South African Republic, we shall find that the calls made upon our Exchequer will be likely to increase from year to year, and that at present we are only at the beginning of what will be a continual charge on our resources; therefore I desire to obtain from the House some expression as to whether the policy on which we have embarked is a wise policy, and ought to have received the approval of the House of Commons. I have, however, given no notice of a Motion for reducing the Vote, and, therefore, I will merely ask the right hon. Gentleman to favour us with further information on the subject. At present our information is exceedingly meagre, and, while urging him for a more explicit statement, I would also endeavour to impress upon him that he should take advantage of the present opportunity, when negotiations are going on in this country, for the settlement of a great number of our political relations in various parts of South Africa, to come to some permanent settlement with regard to Swaziland. Surely it would be a wise step on the part of the Government not merely in our own interests but in those of the natives of Swaziland, were they to seize this opportunity of bringing about a permanent and satisfactory settlement of the question. In doing this the Colonial Office should endeavour to effect such an arrangement as would leave it as little to do as possible, and would throw on South Africa the greater share of responsibility, at the same time relieving the taxpayers of this country, as far as may be, of a permanent burden on their resources.

(7.50.) **Mr. CONYBEARE**: It may save time if I endeavour to bring this matter practically before the Committee by urging upon the Government a point in relation to the liquor traffic in Swaziland and the regulations authorised by the Government of this country in regard to it. I wish to draw the attention of the Government to the Appendix of the main Report of Sir F. de Winton, already quoted by the hon. Member for West Edinburgh, in which was given a very interesting account of the discussion on the liquor question which took place between Sir F. de Winton and his colleague the Transvaal Commissioner, and the native chiefs, the latter of whom desired the traffic to be suppressed altogether. The Swaziland natives sent their representative to put before us, as the Governors of the country, the necessity of suppressing the liquor traffic; and they made strong representations as to the ruin it brought about, not only upon the men but also among the women and young children in Swaziland. If the Committee will turn to page 37 of the Appendix to the Report they will find it there stated that the question was first introduced by Sir Francis de Winton, who agreed that young men and women ought not to drink the stuff, and that those whom he was addressing must try and join them in endeavouring to abolish the evil. Upon this one of the head men said drink was the ruin of the country, and was making it rotten. It is quite clear from what was then said that the Commissioners adopted the idea that the concessions for canteens, granted by the late King, could not be revoked, but the claim made by the Swazi nation was that it was useless to rely simply upon prohibitive regulations which permitted the sale of liquor in the country, because it was found by experience that they were always contravened, even when the most careful regulations were enforced by the police. The natives desired to have the canteens done away with altogether, so that the liquor traffic might be entirely abolished; but this desire was met by the Commissioners with the statement that the canteens had a *locus standi* granted them by the late King, and therefore they could not meet the wishes of the natives by doing away with them. On page 41 of the Appendix there is an account of another meeting between the Commissioners and the head men of the Swazi nation. Sir F. de Winton introduced the business by telling the natives that they had come to the conclusion that something must be done, and they would be glad to hear from the head men their opinion on the subject. A Mr. Brennen, who was present, and who was apparently interested in the canteens, here interposed and asked what evidence there was that the natives wished the canteens to be abolished. Sir F. de Winton replied that the Indunas were present, and Mr. Brennen might see the letter if he wished. So that here we have the canteen concessionaires fighting strongly for their rights, the head men of the Swazi nation strenuously opposing the existence of the canteens, and the Commissioners asserting that they could not recommend prohibitive regulations, and were unable to consider the possibility of putting an absolute veto on the canteens. Now, the statement of Mr. Brennen, that the drinking of spirits did not do harm to white men, was a very strong one indeed; as also was his assertion that British subjects would fight to the bitter end rather than allow these concessions to be taken away from them. I should like to ask the Government whether, in view of a threat of that kind, they are prepared to back up the statement and to insist that these drinks shall be supplied in Swaziland to the degradation and ruin of the natives? Umbandeene said at this Conference that the natives wished to see all the canteens closed, because so long as the canteens were there, the natives could not help drinking. Mr. Brennen, in reply to that, suggested that what the natives asked was impossible, and thereupon Mr. Shepstone pointed out that all they wanted was that a check should be put upon their own drinking. They had no idea of a middle course; all they thought necessary was that the canteens should be closed. Mr. Shepstone added that that was their way of putting it, and that would not affect the rights of white men to indulge in drink. Now, with all due deference to Mr. Shepstone, I cannot quite agree with that interpretation of the wishes of the natives. The only reason why I have ventured to trouble the Committee with quoting at such great length this statement, is in order to bring before the people of this country the great evils which now prevail among the Swazis, and to point out that the natives themselves are desirous that a prohibition should be introduced for the sake of their women and children, because they know perfectly well that indulgence in these drinks means the ruin and degradation of their nation. I think it is rather hard that Mr. Shepstone should have tried to gloss over their words at this Conference. There is no doubt that they want the canteens closed altogether, because if they are open for any one class of people the possibility is that others may be able to get the drink; these people undoubtedly ask for the absolute and total prohibition of the liquor traffic. They know perfectly that, unless the canteens are closed altogether, they will be unable to prevent many of their race from becoming degraded and ruined with drink. This is a very important question for our consideration, and I think we are bound to impress upon the Government the necessity of taking the Swazi view of this matter, and of putting a stop altogether to the importation of liquor into this country. At this Conference, Sir Francis de Winton pointed out the difficulty of closing canteens altogether in face of the concessions which had been granted, and he suggested that it was only possible to go to work in a legal way to stop the drink traffic, and objected to the total demolition of the canteens. It might not be desirable to pull the canteens down altogether; I am not in this country, at any rate, an advocate for anything like compensation, because I do not believe there is a vested interest in licences; but I take it that the case of Swaziland is somewhat different, and I hold that if it were found necessary in the interests of the Swazis to pull down the canteens, and to pay the concessionaires the cost to which they had been put in their erection, it would not be an improper step that we should provide compensation. I have only one other quotation to deal with: Sir Francis de Winton, as will be seen on page 46 of this book, said the Court had considered the question concerning canteens, and would take such steps as would secure that it would be entirely the fault of the natives themselves if they indulged in drink. The chief who represented the Swazis on that occasion suggested that that was not enough, and that what they wanted was that no more spirituous liquors should be imported; and Sir Francis De Winton promised that that point should be further considered, adding that it would be their own fault if any natives indulged in more drinking. Now, the passage which I have quoted showed exactly what were the sentiments of the Swazis, and I hold that it is the duty of the Government to take measures to prevent the importation of spirits into the country. Whether or not the Government take that view, we on this side of the House will at all events have done our duty in bringing this matter before the House. We have now given publicity to the appeals of these unfortunate people, who desire to be rescued from the demoralised condition which their nation may afterwards be placed in by reason of the policy which we have been pursuing. I hope that my appeal to the Government may not be unsuccessful. I do not think it would be agreeable to this House or to this country that the pleadings of these people should be rejected by us, because hereafter we may discover that the rejection has placed the nation in a miserable and degraded condition. What we urge is this: That if it be impossible to prevent the importation of beer—which, undoubtedly, is not so deleterious to any human creature as spirits—we might at any rate prohibit the importation of strong spirits, which are nothing more than poison in the form of fire-water. This fire-water is indeed the worst kind of poison; and we would urge upon the Government, whatever may be their views with regard to the importation of beer and drinks of that kind, which are not poisonous, vigorously to prohibit the importation of these poisonous spirits. I will not trouble the Committee any further, and can only hope that it will not be deaf to the appeals and pleadings of these Swazi chiefs, which certainly ought strongly to appeal to the consciences of Englishmen. I trust the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for the Colonies will give us some satisfactory, undertaking that this matter shall be most carefully considered before any final decision is come to, and that the decision, when arrived at, shall be in the direction of total prohibition of the importation of the worst and most poisonous drinks that exist.

*(8.17.) **Baron H. de WORMS**: I will deal first with the observations of the hon. Member for Edinburgh. The hon. Gentleman will remember that by the 9th clause of the Convention entered into with the Transvaal Republic, it was agreed that any deficit in the revenue available for the purposes of the joint Government should be borne in equal shares. The annual deficit has been approximately estimated at £14,000,

but the proportion required during the present financial year will not exceed £5,000; and I hope that next year probably it will be less, as I believe the revenue will be larger and the expenses less. It is probable that in the future, when the inquiry into the reckless concessions granted by the late King has been completed, two of the Judges may be dispensed with; and in that case, a saving of £3,600 a year will be effected. With regard to the question of the Government of Swaziland, I would remind the hon. Member that three alternatives were open to the Government—the first, that this country should assume the sovereignty; the second, that it should be left to the Boers; and the third, that there should be a joint Government, consisting of a Representative of this country, a Representative of the Transvaal Republic, and a Representative of the Swazi nation. I think it will be admitted that Her Majesty's Government were right in adopting the last alternative. Nobody would approve of placing a white population—a population of Englishmen, Scotchmen, and Irishmen—under the entire control of the Boers. The hon. Gentleman asks me, has anything been done in the way of buying up concessions. Nothing, whatever, has been done with regard to buying up concessions.

*MR. BUCHANAN: I was referring to concessions of taxes. I understood the Transvaal had purchased the concession of Customs duties and postal rights.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: I do not understand that, but I may say that a great many of the concessions have been investigated, and the bad ones are being sifted out. As to the important question raised by the hon. Member for Camborne, who has asked whether Her Majesty's Government are prepared to suppress the liquor traffic in Swaziland, there is every wish on the part of the Government to deal with the liquor traffic, but it is utterly impossible to go beyond the Convention. That has already been ratified.

MR. CONYBEARE: I did not know that the Treaty had been ratified; but I wanted the Government, in any case, to carry out this policy of total prohibition.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: It is utterly impossible for us to go beyond the Convention, and to introduce new conditions after the Treaty has been ratified.

MR. CONYBEARE: When was the Treaty ratified? This is the first I have heard of it.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: The Convention was presented to the House in November, 1890. I explained its provisions three or four times last Session.

MR. CONYBEARE: This is the first opportunity we have had of discussing it.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: Oh, no. The Convention was discussed last year on the Colonial Vote, on two separate occasions.

MR. CONYBEARE: I only ask the Government to carry out the wishes expressed in the appeal of the Swazis themselves, that the importation of spirits should be totally prohibited.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: The Government of Swaziland is at this moment vested in three persons as I have already stated. It is for this Joint Government to lay down such laws for the regulation of the liquor traffic as they think fit. Moreover, it is expressly provided in the Convention that the Representatives forming the Joint Government shall have no share in the management of affairs in which natives alone are concerned. I can, however, assure the hon. Member that, so far as Her Majesty's Government are concerned, they will be most willing to do anything in their power to modify the evils of the liquor traffic. Wherever Her Majesty's Government have control they have made very stringent prohibitive laws, and have done their best to carry them out. But in this case they have no power to interfere, and can only hope that the three Representatives forming the Government will do their utmost to check the evils feared.

(8.29.) MR. CONYBEARE: I should like to point out that this Conference took place prior to the ratification of the Treaty, and the object was to ascertain first the views of the settlers, and secondly those of the natives, upon this grave question of the importation of intoxicating liquors. The natives had made a strong appeal to have the importation of liquor put an end to, in their own defence. I have shown the line taken by our own Commissioner in relation thereto, and I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman what was the use of this discussion between our Commissioner and the Representatives of the natives on the question, if no attention is to be paid to their wishes. It is all very well for the right hon. Gentleman to quote the clause of the Convention and say, "We cannot do anything because the Government of the country is placed in the hands of these three persons, and it is for them to make whatever regulations they like; only our Commissioner has no power whatever to deal with any matter affecting the natives themselves." I do not wish to use harsh language, or I should be inclined to say that it is only quibbling with the question. The broad and important point is that no effect has been given to the wishes of the natives. We have in the Blue Book a list of concession after concession, recognised and confirmed by our own Representative, for the establishment of canteens and dram-shops in that country. We sent out a Commissioner to find out the wishes of the people, and their wishes have been expressed in clear language against the importation of intoxicating liquors. I want to know what line our Government has taken in the matter. Has the Government had under consideration the question whether it would be possible to get rid of these canteen licences by compensating those who hold them, as suggested in the Report of Sir Francis de Winton? If nothing has been done to meet the wishes of the people we have a right to be informed why.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: Will the hon. Gentleman read Article 6 of the Convention? If the hon. Gentleman had read the Convention his speech would not have been delivered.

MR. CONYBEARE: Let us assume that provisions have been made. That disposes of the right hon. Gentleman's argument that our Representative has no power to deal with matters affecting the Swazi people themselves. All I say is that, on the broad, general principle, it was the duty of the Government to take measures for meeting the wishes of the Swazi people. The whole question arises on this Report of Sir F. de Winton, and we could not know what the wishes of the people were until we had the Report before us. That Report was issued to us after the House rose last August. How on earth was it possible for us to inform the House what the wishes of these unfortunate people were before we had an opportunity of appealing to the exact words used by the Swazi Chiefs? This is the first time we have been able to place properly before the House and the country the way in which the piteous appeal of the natives is being treated, and I think that is a proper opportunity for protesting against the pernicious practice of ratifying Conventions behind the back of the House of Commons. How is this House to keep a proper control over the actions of the Representatives of the country abroad unless we are able to see for ourselves the exact facts on which Conventions are based? These natives have a right to be protected against the ruin we are bringing upon them. For the right hon. Gentleman to come down and say, "We cannot do anything now, because the Convention has been ratified" is simply to play with the House. I hope the Government, in view of the interest which attaches to these questions in the eye of the public, will mend their ways in the future, and see that we have proper material for forming a correct judgment on such questions before any conclusion is arrived at. I take a special interest in this matter, because many of my constituents have gone out to the mines in Swaziland, and I am sure they would all endorse the views I have expressed on the subject. (8.41.)

(9.13.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

*(9.15.) MR. BUCHANAN: The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary was in possession of the House, and if he desires to proceed I will not stand in his way. There are one or two points to which I should like to direct attention. In the first place, with reference to the concessions in Swaziland, I referred not to the mining rights, but the concessions acquired by the Transvaal Government postal, telegraph, banking, Customs, &c.; and the point of my argument, enforced by the Report of Sir Francis de Winton, was that our partnership with the Transvaal is not

upon equal terms financially, because the Transvaal Government are in possession of revenue from Customs and other sources. The question I have to ask is whether any steps have been taken, as Sir Francis de Winton contemplated there would be, supposing a dual Government instituted towards the purchase of these concessions of Customs duties? Because undoubtedly if any steps have been taken in that direction, and are likely to bring forth fruit, it would make up for deficiencies in regard to the financial position in Swaziland, as to which we are now asked for this £5,000. In his statement the right hon. Gentleman complained, and complained, I venture to think, rather unfairly, of our raising this discussion now, because he said we had ample opportunity before us last Session. That was far from being the case. There was a supplementary sum for the Swaziland Mission; but, as the right hon. Gentleman will remember, the Government made an appeal to their supporters not to discuss the subject, but to allow the Vote to be taken on the ground that negotiations were not yet concluded. More than that; on the 17th March a supporter of the Government, the Member for one of the divisions of Liverpool, was induced to withdraw a Motion for which he had the first place on that ground. It was not until August 2nd that the Convention was concluded, and the general terms were announced by the right hon. Gentleman on the 4th or 5th August. On the 12th August undoubtedly the Colonial Vote came on for discussion; but I find, on reference to *Hansard*, that it was at 11.44, a quarter of an hour before midnight, that the hon. Member for Peckham rose to ask one or two questions in regard to the Swaziland arrangement. It may be in the recollection of Members of the Committee that we then had merely an abstract of the Convention in an answer from the right hon. Gentleman; we had no papers; we had not the Convention, nor the Report of Sir Francis de Winton, nor this volume of correspondence. These were only issued in October or November last. Since having these we have had absolutely no opportunity of raising the question unless we had made it the subject of Amendment to the Address in reply to the Queen's Speech, and the Government might fairly have complained had we taken that course. The question raised by the hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare) is undoubtedly a serious one. Have we any power under the Convention of controlling the canteen holders and the sale of intoxicating liquors in Swaziland? Article 6 of the Convention provides that the control in Swaziland, in matters in which natives only are concerned, remains unaffected by such organic proclamation. It seems to me it is a strange interpretation to put upon that article to take it to mean that by that section we are prevented from any control over the canteen holders in Swaziland. I suppose the sale of drink is equally to white settlers as to natives, and I suppose regulations apply to the whole of the traffic; and surely it must be straining of the terms of the article to say we have absolutely no jurisdiction over the liquor traffic in Swaziland under the Convention. I think it will largely affect the judgment of the people of this country when we are called upon to find £5,000 now, and during the ensuing year £7,000 in aid of the government of Swaziland, if they are told that notwithstanding such grant in aid we are to have no responsibility or control over this traffic. This is a subject upon which many people take the deepest interest—this sale of drink to natives in Africa. If we are to have no control in this matter, I think the people of this country will regard with great jealousy the terms of this Convention, and will grudge the Vote of £7,000 for the maintenance of government in that country. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman can enlighten us on this point.

(9.23.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I understand that my hon. Friend (Dr. Clark) intends to move a reduction of the Vote on specific grounds; and as that may deprive me of the opportunity, I now wish to put a question in reference to the telegrams to the Lord High Commissioner. The original Estimate was £750, but now we have £1,750. An increase of a few hundreds I could understand, but the original Estimate is more than trebled. I suppose this is in connection with the Chartered Company of South Africa, but is there any explanation of this excessive amount?

*(9.24.) BARON H. DE WORMS: I can assure the hon. Gentleman the increase is not in connection with the South Africa Company; the bulk of the telegrams chargeable under the Vote have relation to Bechuanaland and Swaziland. There was an extensive telegraphic correspondence during the negotiation of the Convention.

*(9.24.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I desire to say a few words upon this drink question. It is, of course, not a new one, and, under various aspects, it has been under public discussion since American and African colonisation first began. I understand that under this Convention we are to have no control over the drink traffic in Swaziland, but we may well ask how it comes about that we have no such power or control? How is it that a responsible Government does not take care of this, which the people of this country consider of the greatest importance? Of course, we understand that the Tory Party, having special interest in the drink question, do not look upon these matters so keenly as we do; but the people generally have the strongest sense of the iniquity of native races being ruined by the supply of strong drink. Swaziland, we understand, is to be governed by three Commissioners, one of whom is the Representative of this country. Cannot we instruct our Representative to take care that the question is dealt with? It is almost an absurdity to suppose that we have no influence in the matter. I am afraid the Government are not sufficiently alive to the importance of this question. Surely they must have the power if they care to use it. When I was in Canada, a good many years ago, I found that the colonists had made it a crime to sell or give ardent spirits to the Indians. Surely if the Colonial Authorities could do that the Imperial Government can do something of the same kind. It has been a reproach to our Christianity that we go among native races with the Bible in one hand and the whiskey bottle in the other; and hence it is that our efforts at civilisation are so often treated with contempt. I hope we may have an assurance that, through our Representative on the Commission, every effort will be made to stop the drink traffic among natives altogether. From my experience in Canada, I know that if it cannot be entirely stopped, it can be very much restricted. Our duty is plain; and I earnestly hope the Government will not neglect it.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: The question referred to by the hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) has not been overlooked. I may say I did not complain at all of the question being brought on. What I complained of was the statement of the hon. Member for Camborne (Mr. Conybeare) that the question had never been brought before the House. When the matter was discussed in August last I gave a complete telegraphic summary of the Convention. The hon. Member for Camborne has asked me about the liquor traffic in the colonies. Hon. Members must recollect that, as we have not annexed Swaziland, we have no power to put down the liquor traffic. We have to consult the Representative of the Transvaal Government and also the Representative of the Swazis themselves. The hon. Member for Camborne says the Swazis are not represented; but they have a Representative in Mr. Shepstone, whose sole business it is to look after their interests. I can give the hon. Member an assurance that we will instruct our Representative to press on his colleagues the desirability of checking the liquor traffic as far as possible. That is all we have power to do, because we cannot act without the co-operation of the Representatives of the Transvaal and the Swazis.

*MR. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say why the Government had not taken power in the Convention to deal with this drink question?

(9.34.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I am not prepared to submit to the House of Commons a plan for dealing with Swaziland, but I sympathise very much with what was said by the hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) to the effect that, whilst we are more and more committing ourselves to dealing with Swaziland, we are not in any way getting out of the difficulty in which we are placed. We have imposed upon ourselves a very heavy responsibility in regard to the liquor traffic. The right hon. Gentleman tells us Her Majesty's Government are desirous of diminishing the liquor traffic as much as possible.

We have heard that again and again, but it has not been done. I do not, in the least, believe that anything will come of the present declarations. One thing is certain, that as long as you allow liquor to be sold to the white Christian, the white Christian will sell it to the natives. If the Government were really seriously in earnest, they would put down the traffic in spite of the interests of the white trader, and the desire of the white Christian for his liquor. I am not altogether in sympathy with the desire of my hon. Friend the Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan) that general South African questions should be settled in Africa. I do think it necessary, however, that we should take to heart what Sir Hercules Robinson has told us, and that we should have an Imperial policy or a South African policy, that we should either tell the South Africans that certain things must be done, and they must pay for them, or that if we pay we shall undertake the management. At present we are taking the chestnuts out of the fire for the benefit of the Cape Government. We pay the piper as long as there is trouble; but when there is benefit to be obtained, it is all made over to the self-governing Cape Colony. That seems to me to be a very undesirable and unfair system as regards this country. On the Vote for the Army we were told that it was intended to withdraw the troops from Natal, and to concentrate them in the Cape Colony. We were told that some effort was to be made to get the Cape Government to contribute to the Vote of the troops; but at present nothing has been paid by them, and I believe nothing will be paid as long as they see we are willing to take the chestnuts out of the fire for them.

(9.40.) DR. CLARK: I beg now to move a reduction of the Vote by £500, being the money contributed by this country of the deficit on the account of the territory. I move this because I am thoroughly opposed to the policy adopted by Her Majesty's Government, and because this is the first time we have had an opportunity of discussing that policy with the Papers before us. I should like to ask the Government one or two questions: Last time we were discussing this matter we had a telegraphic summary of the contents of the Convention before us, but since that we have had the Convention itself placed in our hands; and since that, again, we have had the Report of Sir Francis de Winton. I would ask, "Why has this arrangement been entered into, and who advised it?" Who is the author of this arrangement? Because he ought to get the credit of it, whoever he may be. Up to the present there has been no document published by the Government in which any responsible Authority in South Africa has recommended this course. Two very important officers have tendered advice to the Government in regard to this matter. The first of these is Sir Hercules Robinson, who probably knows more about the question than any living man. He is the greatest authority, just now, in South Africa, having had great experience in the affairs of that country, and having had experience of the transition from the old condition of things to the present. Then there is Sir Francis de Winton, who was sent out by the Government, and he has sent in a Report. Sir Hercules Robinson strongly urged the Government not to take the course they have done. I could have understood their action if, after having received that advice and being unwilling to follow it, they had sent out some one on whose wisdom and discretion they could rely to report, and this official had recommended a different course to that suggested by Sir Hercules Robinson. But we find that their special Commissioner, who was sent out at great cost, strongly endorses the recommendations of Sir Hercules Robinson. He says that the Government should not adopt the course they have taken. I ask, therefore, who recommended the course they have taken, and why has it been adopted? It is not necessary for me to point out the strong character of the words of Sir Hercules Robinson, because they are not official, but I would draw attention to the recommendations of Sir Francis De Winton. He says that the system of dual control you have adopted will be a very bad thing indeed. He says it will not lead to any finality, and that it will result in a state of things adverse to the interests of Great Britain and South Africa. The Government have gone against that opinion. Secondly, I ask, "In whose interest are we to spend this £12,500, and are we to have a perpetual tax of £10,000?" I think the annual tax on this country will be more like £20,000 than £10,000, as I doubt very much whether our partner to the transaction will get his share as easily as you do. In this House you will get some £10,000 by merely ringing the Division bell, but in the Transvaal Parliament things are very different. President Krüger is a strong man, but I know the material of which the Transvaal Parliament is composed, and I doubt whether he will be able to get a single penny of this money. If he makes it a matter of confidence and of remaining in office, the result will be that he will quietly disappear, and somebody else will take his place. In whose interest are you asking for this money? Not in that of the natives of Swaziland. If it had been, there would have been something to say for this Convention; but as usual in treaties between the British and the Boers, or between a Colonial Government and the British Government, native interests are overlooked, neglected, or sold. I have often had to protest against that. I did so in the Zululand question, five years ago. The Boers and the British are able to look afer themselves, but not so the natives. Under the precious 6th clause, which you tell us ties your hands and prevents your doing anything, the natives are left a prey to the white people, who secure all sorts of wicked concessions from them. They get concessions, for instance, for selling liquor, and, as a result, I have seen the Swazi girls asking everybody for money and buying liquor, and lying about the canteen doors, drunk. You have debauched the people, and there is no power given by the Convention for preventing further demoralisation. In whose interest, I ask again, can this be? It can only be in the interest of the concessionaires. The Swazi King, Umbandine, was a very decent man at one time, but he fell into the hands of unscrupulous adventurers, who robbed him of all his possessions by the concession system; and now you have set up a Government to empower these adventurers to carry out these unjust concessions. Why has this policy been adopted? Do the Government think it will settle the question, or do they intend to re-open the matter? It has been imposed on the Swazis without their consent, and on the Boers by a threat. The Swazis have some right to ask us for protection, for when we annexed the Transvaal the Swazis were a portion of it, and by the Transvaal law these men had an absolute right to their own location—and Swaziland was one large location. By the Treaty of Prætoria we cut off Swaziland, because there were no white men there—as we did in the case of Bechuanaland—and it came under the control of the King only. Swaziland is a small portion of the Transvaal. It is not so large a portion of the Transvaal as Kent is of England. It was a native location that no white man could obtain any control or power over, but when it was cut off white adventurers came in, and the King gave away concessions until he had parted with every acre of his country, with all mineral rights, grazing rights, and rights of every possible kind, to his secretaries and members of his Council, if the reports in all the South African newspapers are correct. It is somewhat amusing to see the kind of concessions he has given. There are 42 wicked concessions which the Swazi people very much object to, and which they say the King had no right to give; but I understand from the South African papers that the Courts are upholding all the concessions. Mr. Thoburn, for some time secretary to the King—like Mr. Shepstone—has a concession for the manufacture of gas, another for surveying, and others for pawnbroking and lotteries. Mr. Cohen obtained a concession for Customs which he sold to the Transvaal Republic, who now have the sole right to raise any Customs they think fit in that country. The mere mention of this shows the absurdity of the arrangement. There are concessions given for forming townships, wool washing, the importation of machinery, the importation of cement, tobacco, and other things. A Mr. Harrington had the right to all Inland Revenue and taxation raised in the country, and that the Transvaal Government have also bought. Another person has the sole right of insurance. Mr. McNab has the sole right to sell patent medicines, other people have the sole right of photography, farming, for selling silver, glass ware, for tanneries, for postal arrangements, for advertising, for grinding, for supplying veterinary surgeons, prospecting, representing the commissionaires, railways and refreshment bars, abandoned concessions, dynamite. The railway concession the Transvaal Government has also bought. One man has bought the right to import all goods free. These are a few of the 200 concessions which have been granted. These rights were given by the poor old King when he was drunk and had no notion of what he was doing. I saw him myself giving these concessions. One man came to him and complained that he had a concession for mineral purposes overland, which the King, a fortnight before, had handed to somebody else. The King said "I am sorry about that; but can you not agree." "No," was the answer "we cannot." The King then said "If you like I will give land somewhere else." "I don't want that," said the man. "Then," replied the King, "The strongest man must keep it." The Court which has been sent out to Swaziland has not to settle whether or not these concessions should have been conceded, but whether they are *bonâ fide*, whether the King really did grant them or not, because frauds were often committed, a nought being sometimes added to a figure, so, for instance, as to make "20" acres of land "200" and "300" acres "3,000." The price of the drink concession was £10, and for that sum power was given to debauch the people. This country has no control over it, neither have the Swazis themselves. They are to be left to drink, and witchcraft, and anarchy. Those who have got letters by to-day's mail, or the last mail, will find that the native regiments are getting drunk and fighting each other regarding the division of the women. Anarchy still exists there, and that anarchy is brought about by us, because we have not done anything for the Swazis. Therefore I ask the Committee to refuse this Vote, and to reverse the policy of Her Majesty's Government. The question is what policy should be adopted in its place. There are two or three policies which would tend to the benefit of the white people and the Swazis. I do not care for the white people. They have gone out under false pretences, and for inadequate sums have got rights from the King, many of which he did not even know the meaning of. It will be seen, therefore, that there were several courses open to the Government. There was first of all the course they have adopted, then they might have come to an arrangement by which Great Britain should have taken possession of Swaziland, as we did in the case of Bechuanaland. In that case the Government would have had a right to have asked Parliament for money, because it would then have had power as well as responsibility, whereas now it has responsibility but no power. Had Swaziland been as near as Bechuanaland, so that it could have been as easily got at, the wisest course would have been to have annexed it, but you cannot annex it now; it is surrounded on three sides by the Transvaal and on the fourth by the Portuguese, and the only way through it would have been through the Tonga territory, which is exceedingly unhealthy. In 1886 I took a Division in this House against your giving to the Boers the territory which would have enabled you to have dealt with Swaziland, but I was defeated, and it is entirely by your own action that you are now shut off from that part of the country. You are upon its borders and, but for this Convention, you could easily have added Swaziland to Natal, but you neglected the opportunity. The only other course for you to have pursued was to have arranged that the Transvaal Government should have taken over Swaziland and given you some equivalent for it. That was recommended by the Natal Government, the Cape Government, the High Commissioner and the Special Commissioner, and the whole of them advised Her Majesty's Government against the course they have taken, but instead of taking Swaziland over, which would have been the best thing for the natives, you did exactly what you ought not to have done and gave the country to the new Republic. The result is that you have practically failed to settle this question, although you have succeeded in involving yourselves in no end of difficulty and expense. The general result will be a state of affairs adverse to the interests of Great Britain in South Africa. Under these circumstances, I move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £5,000. I repudiate the settlement you have made. It is not in the interests of the natives, who will continue to be debauched and demoralised, whose territory will be taken away from them, whose mineral rights have been given to European adventurers, and to whom no sort of protection has been afforded. You merely bolster up injuries which would be prejudicial to any population, and adopt a policy which is contrary to the well-being of South Africa.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item T (Swaziland), be reduced by £5,000."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

*(10.5.) CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I quite concur with the statement that our having allowed the Boers to penetrate in Swaziland has been the cause of much of the trouble; I do not personally think there was anything in the treaty to prevent our taking Swaziland and ruling it ourselves, even without the assent of the Transvaal Government, but this was not the general opinion. I am strongly opposed to the alternative suggested by the hon. Member opposite, namely, that we should hand Swaziland over to the Transvaal Government; to do this, without making satisfactory arrangement for the welfare of the people, would have been a sad breach of faith. It has occurred to me that supposing the present arrangement should last for a number of years, an opening might be offered for undoing what we did in 1886, by making some sort of an exchange for that portion of the territory which is between Swaziland and Natal; but that is a question of future policy. Not having taken either of these courses there only remained the policy Her Majesty's Government have adopted. The hon. Member opposite has taken exception to this policy on various grounds. He says the interests of the natives have been entirely set aside, and that the arrangement come to has been contracted against the advice and judgment of those who are most experienced in South African affairs. I am under the impression, from what I have read, that Sir Hercules Robinson was in favour of handing Swaziland over to the Transvaal Government, but that was because he was of opinion that our own Government could not act strongly enough if they were to take over the territory. I want to point out, that on a question of policy of this sort we are entitled to judge for ourselves, while giving the High Commissioner's opinion every weight, though not treating it as if it dealt with a matter entirely beyond us. We have to look to something more than to the idiosyncrasies of the people or local peculiarities. We have to look at the question as it affects our other colonies. I disagree with my hon. Friend when he says that the Government acted wrongly in not accepting the advice of those who had great experience. As I have said, while attaching weight to the opinion of those of experience, it is none the less our duty to consider such questions apart from local peculiarities, and in connection with our policy as affecting other Colonial Governments. My hon. Friend further complained of there not being sufficient advantages to balance the responsibilities undertaken. That there will be some charge upon us, is without doubt; but if you look to Bechuanaland and others of the colonies, you will find that within a year or two they make a profitable return in trade. The hon. Member denounced the expenditure in connection with South Africa generally, and said that no return was obtained. I am convinced that if he were to add up the advantages derived from commerce, that there is a large balance upon the whole in favour of this country. The expenditure we incur in opening up these countries, little and narrow as it is, is not merely useful in safeguarding and protecting the interests of the natives, but is productive in the development of commerce with this country. With regard to the liquor question, so far as I have been able to discover, the interests of the natives in that direction have not been sufficiently safeguarded by the Convention made last year. Subject to correction, I am bound to say something more might have been done in making the Convention, to prevent the introduction of liquor among the natives. It may be that difficulties were thrown in the way by the other Party to the Convention, still I am very much inclined to think that if greater insistence had been shown with the Transvaal Government, much more might have been done to exclude drink, which does so very much to destroy the natives. Upon the whole, I congratulate Her Majesty's Government in the general course they have taken, in concluding the Convention, considering it merely as a temporary, and not a permanent, arrangement. I consider it is of advantage that the arrangement should be temporary until we see what will be the future course

of the South African Republic. So much depends upon future events that it would be unwise either to take Swaziland or to give it over to the Transvaal. The period of probation allowed us therefore—during which I hope the best interests of the natives will be carefully considered—will be best for those who have taken part in the Convention.

*(10.25.) BARON H. DE WORMS: I am sure that those who have listened to the speech of my hon. and gallant Friend must feel that he expressed not only the views of the great majority of this House, but the great majority of the people of this country when he said that, if Her Majesty's Government had adopted the course suggested by the hon. Member for Caithness of handing over to the Transvaal the white and native population, we would have acted contrary to their wishes. My hon. Friend, in referring to the concessions, seemed to believe that they had been sanctioned by Her Majesty's Government. No statement could be more erroneous. Those concessions, as I stated in the earlier part of the evening, have been investigated, and we have discarded those which are worthless, and have been obtained by improper means. Therefore, there is not a shadow of foundation for saying that Her Majesty's Government in the slightest degree approved the concessions referred to by the hon. Member for Caithness. The speech of the hon. Member for Caithness was rather a remarkable one, because he spoke in the interests of the Boers in urging that the Treaty of London ought never to have been made. While implying that Her Majesty's Government had some responsibility for the making of it, he seemed to forget that it was made in 1884, when the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian was in power, and that his policy with regard to the Transvaal was the subject of a Vote of Censure moved against the Government of the day. The hon. Member said that, notwithstanding the existence of that Treaty, it should be abrogated or ignored by the Government, and Swaziland handed over to the Boers. There were three courses open to the Government. One was to ignore the arrangement of 1884 and take over Swaziland; secondly, to abrogate the Treaty of 1884 and allow the Boers to take it over; and the third and most rational course was the one which has been adopted — namely, to respect the Treaty of 1884 and establish a joint system of government. Well, then, the hon. Member proceeded to say that it was owing to the action of our Government that the natives of Swaziland have been degraded and brought into a miserable condition. The hon. Gentleman seems to have forgotten the whole history of Swaziland. When those negotiations began the Swazis were, owing to the drunken King who ruled over them, in such a degraded condition that the Government, in conjunction with the Transvaal Government, felt that the moment had arrived when a better state of things ought to be established, and the natives be relieved from their miserable state of barbarism and anarchy. I am therefore at a loss to understand how the hon. Member has arrived at the conclusion that the policy of the Government has reduced the Swazis to a state of degradation. The state of affairs which led to the intervention of the Government in Swaziland was the indiscriminate granting of concessions by the late King, and the incursion of numerous whites, some of them in search of mining and other concessions. Some of these whites, with the consent of the Swazis, were elected a Committee of Government, but they had no experience of administration, and nearly all the members of that Committee had private interests of their own, while their proceedings were marked by internal dissensions and an absence of desire for the welfare of the country. That was the condition of Swaziland when the Government interfered to see whether they could not remedy it. A Report was made in October 1889, by the resident and official agent to the Swazi nation, who stated that affairs for a long time had been growing worse and worse, and that there was no sort of security for the life and property of the inhabitants. Then it was that Sir Francis de Winton was appointed to inquire into the condition of Swaziland, and he reported in favour of handing the land over to the Boers. But the Government were not bound to accept and act upon that Report. They alone were responsible to the country, and accepting that responsibility they chose the other alternative, under which the Provisional Government was established. It consisted of one officer nominated by our Government, one by

the South African Government, and one by the Swazi nation. It is perfectly true we have been put to certain expense in Swaziland, and probably we shall have to spend money on it for some years to come. But if we had violated the Treaty of 1884 and annexed the country, should we not have had to pay much more? It is strange that those who are always advocating economy should, in the same breath, wish us to take over a responsibility which would involve an expenditure of a far greater amount. As a matter of fact we acted in accordance with the Convention of 1884 and the policy of the Government was dictated in the interests of the Swazis themselves. They are protected by the convention whatever hon. Members may say to the contrary. If hon. Members will read Article 6 they will see that all matters in which the natives alone are concerned are to be regulated by native laws and customs.

DR. CLARK: How about Article 5?

*BARON DE WORMS: That provides that concessions within the boundaries of Swaziland shall be recognised and respected if they meet with the approval of Her Majesty's Commissioner. That is the very article to which I should have thought the hon. Member would not have drawn attention. His argument has been all the way through that these reckless concessions have been recognised by the Government, and yet here, in this very Convention signed by the Government, is a clause that any reckless or absurd concession shall not be declared valid unless it meets with the approval of Her Majesty's High Commissioner or of the President of the Transvaal Republic. Anything more illogical than the hon. Member's argument could hardly be conceived. Article 5 saves the Swazis from being dragged into illegal or improper concessions. The Government did not agree to the Treaty until it was expressly arranged that the Swazis themselves should have a special Representative. Mr. Shepstone is that special Representative, and he has equal authority with the Representatives of Great Britain and of the Transvaal Republic. Therefore, the policy of the Government has been to protect the Swazi nation. There is no doubt the degraded condition of Swaziland was brought about by the chronic drunken condition of its late King I must say the suggestion of the hon. Member, that we ought to have handed over the control of the white population to the Boer Government, was one not likely to find favour in this House, neither do I believe it would have found favour outside. No doubt it would be supported by the hon. Member himself, who represents the Boer Government in an official capacity; therefore, we cannot, with all due respect to him, look upon his utterances as absolutely impartial. I trust that I have been able to dispose of the main arguments of the hon. Gentleman, and I think the House will not wish me to repeat the statement I have already made as to the policy of the Government. We have been actuated by the best wishes for the welfare of the Swazis. My hon. Friend has alluded to the drink question. I can assure him that the Government will communicate with the Representative of Great Britain in Swaziland, and request him to place himself in communication with the Transvaal Government, and see what arrangements can be made with regard to the liquor traffic.

(10.37.) DR. CLARK: If the right hon. Gentleman had read Article 5 he would possibly have understood it, which he does not now. It begins by—saving all existing rights; and that is what I object to. Up to the proclamation of last year everything given by Umbandine is reserved and saved by this clause.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: The question of right is now being tried.

DR. CLARK: All that requires the sanction of the Government is that which was granted after the date of the organic proclamation. The Court has to inquire into the validity of concessions which are disputed and which do not appear in the King's book. But all the concessions, practically, were given to Shepstone, Nuller, and Thorburn; and as they took care they appeared in the King's book, the validity cannot be inquired into. The only ground upon which a concession can be declared void is, that it was obtained by fraud. And what has the Court done? I have carefully studied the South African papers, and all disputed concessions, with but one exception, have been declared valid and binding upon the Swazi people. I am not here in this House pleading the cause of the Boers; I am pleading the cause of the

Swazis, as I pleaded the cause of the Zulus against the Boers; and I ask the Government to take the advice of all who are able to speak with authority on this question. Who are responsible for the Treaty? Sir Hercules Robinson and ex-General Sir Evelyn Wood—who, when he entered into the negotiations, was burning to avenge Majuba—and the Chief Justice of the Cape. It was simply because the Swazis were at one time under the Boers that they lived; otherwise, the Zulus would have wiped them out altogether. Under Boer law, native reserves cannot be sold to white men; neither is drink allowed to be sold to natives; but under our rule, the Swazi's are deprived of the protection of both those provisions; and, therefore, I say that Sir Hercules Robinson, in acting on the evil advice of General Wood, has done much to debauch these natives. We know that in no territory in Africa do natives live so comfortable as those under Boer rule; and if Swaziland had been placed under the Boers, I venture to say that these concessions, of which I complain, would not have been ratified. In the joint Government to which I have referred, Mr. Shepstone represents the Swazis. Who is Mr. Theophilus Shepstone? He is a fraudulent bankrupt, who, having embezzled the funds of his clients, bolted away to Swaziland, and he is a fine type of the Europeans to be found there. The Transvaal, indeed, is a kind of sewer for all the vagabondage of South Africa. There you find some of the biggest rascals—the scum of the land. The Government have degraded and debauched the people by their policy, and not only are they doing nothing under the treaty to save their rights, but they are pursuing a course which will probably cause difficulty in the future.

*(10.50.) MR. GOSCHEN: I am glad the House understands now that when the hon. Member for Caithness talks of the debauching of the Swazis, the Government which made the arrangement of 1881 was the Government which began the debauching of the Swazis. In the early part of his speech it would have been thought that it was the policy of the present Government which has had that effect. The hon. Gentleman spoke as if it was the present Government which brought Mr. Shepstone there, but what has been the policy of the present Government? Mr. Shepstone, before the existing arrangement was made, was practically ruler of the Swazi people, and what this Government has done is to neutralise the effect of the incursion of adventurers, to endeavour to stop the abuses which exist, and to establish something like regular government in Swaziland. The position had become intolerable, because the adventurers were practically bringing Swaziland into a condition which might have been a disgrace to civilisation. Under these circumstances, the Government had to make their choice as to what remedy should be applied. Whatever the hon Member may say, and whatever other hon. Members may think at the present moment, I assert that there would have been the greatest possible outcry in this country if the Government had handed over Swaziland to the Boers. We should have heard, even from hon. Members opposite, denunciations of the weakness of such a policy, and of the abandonment of the natives, with reference to whom we are under some responsibility. With regard to finance, it would have been perfectly easy, if the Government had simply wished to adopt a convenient course, to hand over Swaziland to the Boers. It was a tempting policy in many ways. Swaziland is an embarrassment to us, but it is an embarrassment we cannot shake off in conformity with the obligations we have entered into simply by taking the course advocated by the hon. Member. They do not understand the sentiment of the British people, or even the views of this House, who think the Government would be likely to accept simply the policy of handing over Swaziland to the Boers. Therefore, the Government fell back on the existing arrangement, certainly not an ideal arrangement, but merely a temporary arrangement. However, it gave time to the Government to endeavour to work out a better system, and to see whether some arrangement could be come to by which the natives and the whites might be protected. The hon. Member objects to the Government undertaking the expense. Well, it is a very disagreeable expense, and the English taxpayer will be likely to get very little for his money; but let hon. Members understand that if they go into the Lobby in support of the Amendment, they will

be going in for the alternative policy of handing over Swaziland to the Boers. We are all interested in putting down the drink system, and reference has been made to the fact that the Boers do not tolerate the drink traffic with the natives in the Transvaal. If that is so, they will support our Representative in his efforts to suppress the drink traffic, and the liquor trade ought to have a very short existence in Swaziland.

Dr. CLARK: May I point out that General Joubert has already urged the joint Government to do as the natives desire in regard to the liquor traffic.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: If the Representative of the Boers is in favour of putting down the liquor traffic, and will support our Representative in his efforts in that direction, the liquor traffic ought to have a very short existence. My right hon. Friend has undertaken to use all his influence in that direction.

*(11.1.) Sir J. POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): The right hon. Gentleman has said very truly that Her Majesty's Government have, in taking charge of Swaziland, taken upon themselves a task of great embarrassment. How have the Government got into this position of embarrassment? The most experienced High Commissioner of our time advised them not to take over Swaziland. They acted against the advice of Sir H. Robinson. They then sent out a special Commissioner, Colonel De Winton, and they acted against his advice also. My right hon. Friend the Under Secretary said that all the embarrassing concessions are subject to the decision of the Courts. No doubt many of the smaller and less important of these concessions are being brought before the Courts, but the most important, such as the postal, telegraphic railway, banking, and Customs concessions, have been actually purchased by the Government of the Transvaal, and in the opinion of the law officers of the Crown that Government are within their legal rights in obtaining possession of these concessions. Looking to that state of things, it is clear the House will agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that Her Majesty's Government have certainly got a most embarrassing bargain in Swaziland.

(11.3.) Mr. CONYBEARE: The argument of the Chancellor of the Exchequer is that Her Majesty's Government could not act otherwise than they have acted: that they were afraid of public opinion. What, he said, would the country have said?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: What did the country expect?

Mr. CONYBEARE: The country always expects a Government to do their duty, but they do not always do it. I do not suggest that the right hon. Gentleman and his colleagues did not think they were doing their duty, but the Chancellor of the Exchequer's argument was that if they had adopted the policy which is advocated by my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness (Dr. Clark), and which I do not support, namely, to hand Swaziland over to the Boers, they could not have stood against the indignant explosion of public opinion which he imagines would have ensued upon such an act of weakness, to use his own phrase. I am glad the right hon. Gentleman is, even at this late hour, learning something. Perhaps, the storm which was raised about his head last year in respect to his notorious Budget has led him to be wiser in future. But I want to point out that the closing words of the right hon. Gentleman's speech were practically opposed to what we heard earlier in the evening from the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said if General Joubert, as my hon. Friend pointed out, is in favour of putting down the liquor traffic he will support the efforts in that direction made, or to be made, by our Representative, and the liquor traffic ought to have a short existence. That is not what the Under Secretary led us to understand. I put the question to the right hon. Gentleman: "Will you take steps for the prohibition of the liquor traffic?" and what was his answer?

*Baron H. de WORMS: I gave that answer. The hon. Gentleman was not present.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I am speaking of the answer the right hon. Gentleman gave when I was here. Of course, during the evening I had to seek refreshment, like the right hon. Gentleman. The Under Secretary led me to understand that at the present time it was beyond the power of our Commissioner to interfere in this matter. He quoted Clause 6 of the Convention, and charged me with not taking the trouble to read the Convention. I want to be satisfied whether the Under Secretary is right or not. I am going into the Lobby against the Government, not to support my hon. Friend's (Dr. Clark's) plea for the annexation of Swaziland to the Transvaal, but as a protest against what I hold to be the fact that the Government have precluded themselves by the terms of their Convention against conceding, without the express demand or wish of the people, that their young people and old people should be protected against ruin and demoralisation caused by the importation of drink. There is not a single word in this Convention which even intimates the intention of the Government to put down the importation of spirituous liquor. The right hon. Gentleman pointed to Article 5 in connection with the question of the people having granted away their rights and so on, and would have us believe that the Court which is sitting to determine the validity of some of these concessions will be able to do right as between the Swazi and the concessionaires. The right hon. Gentleman did not say what is meant by the words, "saving all existing rights," which appear at the commencement of the article, and which govern the whole of the article. Does the right hon. Gentleman ask us to believe that any single concession, whether it be for a canteen, or a lottery, or anything else, that is granted by Umbandine will be upset by the Court, unless it can be proved there was something in the nature of fraud in the obtaining of it? What is the Court going to do in the case of the concession registered by Mr. Shepstone and granted to Mr. W. T. B. Wilson on the 28th March, 1889, giving a monopoly for lotteries? It appears you are going to demoralise and debauch these unfortunate people not only by drink, but also by gambling, which is so familiar with the aristocratic people of this country. Will the Under Secretary take steps to have all the proceedings of the Court placed before the House of Commons? Fortunately the Convention will come up for review at the end of three years, and then we shall be able to see whether our influence has been productive of mischief or the reverse. I do not desire to advocate the annexation of Swaziland to the Transvaal, and I think that under the circumstances, the arrangement that we made, although a very humble and by no means heroic arrangement on the part of the Government was, perhaps, not an unreasonable one. But everything depends upon the way it is administered, and I assert, in spite of what the Under Secretary said earlier in the evening, unless he is prepared to pay attention to the voice of the Swazi people in connection with the matter of the liquor traffic, there will be great mischief in the future.

*(11.20.) Sir J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I should like to ask the Under Secretary whether he has taken into consideration the future arrangements in Swaziland, because there is no worse government than a dual government? There is in Swaziland a dual control—half British and half Boer. Would it not be possible to come to an arrangement to divide the country into two portions and have one portion under the supreme control of Great Britain, and the other portion under the control of the Transvaal? The present system will lead to the utter destruction of the native tribes; all the Europeans' vices and none of their virtues will be introduced.

(11.21) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I never gave a vote with greater pleasure than I shall give my vote to-night [*Cries of* "Oh!"] If hon. Gentlemen think they will shorten the proceedings by crying "Oh!" they are very much mistaken. So far as I can see, the only persons in the world who are in favour of this expenditure, and the retention of this dual control, are certain vague Jingoes to whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer alluded, and who he fears will take an unfavourable view of the Government if they act according to the wishes of everybody who knows anything about the matter, and give up this attempt to rule over Swaziland. Your own High Commissioner and Special Commissioner have reported against the present system. You have the Cape Government and the Government of Natal opposed to it. You have the Swazi people themselves opposed to it, and you admit the English taxpayer will get uncommonly little for this expenditure. Who then, in the name of Heaven, except these vague Jingoes, are in favour of this expenditure, and why should we spend money—throw it away, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer admits—upon such a foolish object as the maintenance of our sway there? It appears to me we have established in Swaziland the most criminal Government it is possible to conceive. You got hold of a half drunken King and induced him to grant concessions of all kinds of things and to all kinds of people. A concession has been given to an individual to establish in this savage land operas, music halls, and to have a monopoly in midwives. Half a dozen concessions have been given to sell spirituous liquors. In every sort of way the Swazi have been exploited. My impression is that the next thing we shall be asked to do will be to vote a sum of money to do away with these concessions. We shall be told that this property in liquor, lotteries, operas, music halls, and midwives is sacred. I protest against money not only being wasted, but injuriously expended in order to please the vague people who appear to dominate the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Colonial Office.

*(11.26.) **SIR G. BADEN-POWELL** (Liverpool, Kirkdale): The hon. Gentleman says nobody but only some vague Jingoes uphold the present system. I personally was very much against the arrangement made, but I see definite reason for adhering to the arrangement. We have, after consultation with the Government of the South African Republic, come to this conclusion, and we are bound by treaty to maintain this system for three years. I do not think it would be consistent with our honour to break the treaty. In the second place, we have to uphold existing rights, but I think we have made arrangements by which a distinction can be drawn between concessions which are ridiculous and those which are reasonable. I think the arrangement entered into will be excellent, as far as the natives are concerned. I do not think you can stop drunkenness among native races by mere control of the liquor traffic. What is far more effectual is to establish a civilised and strong Administration, and I hope that the result of our three years of temporary joint control in Swaziland will be to establish a proper Administration, which will effectually control the terrible curse of drunkenness in the native races.

Mr. Labouchere

(11.28.) **DR. CLARK**: I am glad to hear from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this is only a temporary arrangement. So far as its most important clauses are concerned, however, the treaty goes on for ever. Only one or two points affecting Tongaland will come to an end if that district does not join the Cape Customs Union. I do not think it will be possible for it to join the Customs Union, as Tongaland has on one side the Cape, with 15 per cent. Customs duties, and on the other side Natal with 5 per cent. duties. The hon. Member for Liverpool (Sir G. Baden-Powell) says the arrangement must be maintained because we have entered into it with the South African Republic. The South African Republic has, however, pointed out the absurdity of the arrangement, and it has only ratified it in order to give it a trial. Evidently the Government intended to give powers to this new and costly Court to annul certain concessions that had been legally granted, but were contrary to the rights of the Swazi people, and contrary to public policy; but, unfortunately, the 5th clause of the Convention construes all the concessions granted up till last year, and the 3rd clause only gives the Court power to consider disputed concessions. If the Chancellor of the Exchequer really represents the views of the Government they have adopted these clauses because they are afraid of public opinion. The thing will, however, break down financially, because I am satisfied, from my own knowledge of the Boers, that they will never pay for the support of an expensive Government which does no good to them or anybody else. I know the gentlemen who form this Court. The head of it (Mr. Detoy) is an English barrister, and I am sure that if supported by the Government they would, under the saving clause, consider these concessions on their merits, and in the interests of the Swazi people. I am glad to have this assurance from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the arrangement is only a temporary one, and I am convinced that events will prove it is as indefensible as were the arrangements of 1881-84.

(11.32.) **DR. TANNER**: In respect to these concessions we have heard a great deal of a Court of Inquiry into the abstract rights and wrongs; but has there been any specific point upon which a concession has been abrogated? From hon. Members who are better posted up in these matters than I can pretend to be, I understand this Court has been sitting for some time past, and if the Under Secretary can show us any instance in which a concession has been done away with or modified he will do much to clear up a great amount of doubt this Debate has shown to be existing. The Chancellor of the Exchequer said very rightly it is an embarrassing position in Swaziland. Can he tell us if the Transvaal Government, who have obtained concessions, are prepared to accept the dictum of this Court in respect to matters in which they are interested, or is there reason to apprehend a state of affairs we should all deplore, and strained relations between the Government of the Transvaal and Great Britain? An assurance on these points may enable us to terminate this discussion without a Division. It is an embarrassing subject, though some light has been thrown upon it by this Debate, lengthened somewhat by the Under Secretary not being fully acquainted with some of the details of the question.

(11.35.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 51; Noes 121.—(Div. List, No. 81.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

CLASS V.

10. £15,005, Treasury Chest.

(11.50.) DR. TANNER: A few words of explanation on this would not be out of place from a high Financial Authority like the Chancellor of the Exchequer. How is it that he, with his great knowledge and experience, cannot in connection with these bi-metallic questions, make such provision as will save the Treasury from this large loss? This money only deals with the silver dollars of Hong Kong, the Straits Settlements, and, I think, Ceylon—only a small portion of a large colonial area. I hope we may not be told by such a great master of finance as the right hon. Gentleman is accounted by many to be, that it is due to chance that this loss occurs. Any want of foreknowledge on his part could be amply supplied by a right hon. colleague, the present Minister for Agriculture, who, we all know, has mastered the intricacies of the bi-metallic system. I should like to know if these silver dollars are paid to the officials in Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements—are they obliged to submit to the loss by depreciation? I hope we shall have some explanation.

(11.51.) COLONEL NOLAN: I am sadly in want of a little enlightenment, and candidly confess I do not know what the "Treasury Chest" means. If it has occurred in the Estimates before it has escaped my notice. Is there a "Treasury Chest" for India? So far as I can make out, this Vote has the laudable object of making up the difference between gold and silver in payment of salaries in Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements. Now, we know there have been constant complaints that officers in India suffer heavy loss by the depreciation of the value of the rupees in which they are paid. If there is a Treasury Chest in Downing Street which puts this matter right for Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements, why is there not a Treasury Chest for India, where the loss is felt in a more marked manner? This Vote arises, I presume, out of questions connected with the bi-metallic currency, and there may be a reason which has special reference to Hong Kong and the Straits Settlements, but the sum is large, and I think we may well ask for some explanation.

*(11.55.) THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I must ask to be excused from going into the whole question, and as to regulations concerning India—payments there do not come from the same fund, and I have no knowledge on the subject. I must leave that to my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for India. But in regard to the present Vote, I may explain that during the past eight years there has been a gain to the Treasury Chest on the exchange of about £90,000. But this year, owing to the change made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in favour of soldiers and sailors, the Treasury Chest has suffered a loss of about £15,000.

COLONEL NOLAN: But what is the Treasury Chest?

*MR. JACKSON: It represents the balances held by paymasters in different parts of the world. The exchange is fixed at the beginning of each quarter, and if it goes against us there is so much loss, and during the past year this loss has been £15,000. That represents the loss to the Treasury Chest out of about a million of money.

(11.56.) COLONEL NOLAN: But I want the point to be made clear—is it due to depreciation in silver or to rate of exchange? I think we ought to have the distinction drawn. I know these matters are much mixed up by Indian officials. For my own part I do not pretend to know much about it, and so I seek information.

*MR. JACKSON: I should have thought the hon. and gallant Gentleman would have known that the rate of exchange is more or less governed by the price of silver.

COLONEL NOLAN: But it is not the same thing.

*MR. JACKSON: The price of silver has fallen considerably—from 54 pence to 44 pence an ounce in the last year.

(11.57.) MR. CONYBEARE: But surely it will not be denied that the rupee, which 12 months ago was worth 1s. 5d., now is worth something near 2s. [*Cries of* "No, no!"] Well, without arguing this, I pass to the point I wish to put. We understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that in some years there is a considerable difference in favour of the Treasury Chest, a surplus of from £20,000 to £50,000, and if that is so, why does not the surplus in one year balance the deficiency in another?

*(11.58.) MR. JACKSON: The accounts for each year are kept separately.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE: I only wish to say it is most desirable that soldiers and sailors should be paid in currency, the amount representing the real value of their pay. I know from personal experience how in former times both officers and men suffered very material loss from being paid in Government paper, which was only encashed by merchants as a favour, and at a large discount.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS VI.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Supplementary sum not exceeding £3,915, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for Superannuation and Retired Allowances."

Mr. Jackson

It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow; Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) ACT (1890) AMENDMENT BILL.

(No. 239.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

(12.2.) MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I do not wish to delay this Bill, but I desire to get some explanation. I want to know whether the right hon. Gentleman has obtained thorough information in regard to the districts to be supplied under the Seed Bill? I find that in Gweedore and in other distressed districts in Ireland at the present time, no seed potatoes have been provided. I find there is in Gweedore only one resident Guardian, who is a land-agent, and that the Chairman of the Poor Law Board is the well-known Mr. Olphert. I wish to know whether under this Bill the Government will be prepared to make the Board do their duty and, that failing that, they will themselves be able to undertake the duty which the Board so grossly neglects?

(12.3) MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): And will the Government take care that when the seed potatoes are in the ground and grown up Mr. Olphert——

THE CHAIRMAN: These observations have no reference to the clause.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I wish to know what is being done about the seed potatoes in the Island of Achill?

THE CHAIRMAN: That has no reference to this clause.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2.

(12.4) MR. CONYBEARE: I wish to make some observations on this clause, which refers to the Guardians obtaining security for the payment, of the price of seeds sold. During last year Mr. Olphert sent armed forces on to the land of his tenants, rooted up their growing crops and carted them away. [*Cries of* "No!"] Yes he did; I happen to know it as a matter of fact. I want to know whether the tenants have any security that if they have to pay for these seed potatoes, Mr. Olphert will be permitted to root them up?

THE CHAIRMAN: That clearly has no relevance to the clause.

(12.5.) DR. TANNER: In the Island of Achill a certain number of seed potatoes have been supplied and the Guardians will not be able to obtain security inasmuch as, owing to the abject poverty of the unfortunate people, they have been obliged to eat the seed potatoes supplied to them. I hope some special provisions will be made with regard to the administration of the measure in this particular district.

(12.8.) MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): I want to ask what steps the Government will take to make the Guardians obtain security where it is possible to do so? I do not think there will be in most cases any security worth having, but where there is I want to know what steps will be taken?

*THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): The object of this Bill is a limited one, and I do not think the clause now before the Committee will justify any general discussion respecting the administration of the Seed Potatoes Act. That Act, passed in the short Session of last year, inherited from the former Act of 1881 a provision under which it was necessary before a supply of potatoes was made to any one cultivating land in conacre, to get the consent of the tenant of the land, who must be a party to the advance. I quite agree that it will be the duty of the Board of Guardians to see that proper security is obtained, and that it will be the duty of the Local Government Board to watch the action of the Boards of Guardians in this respect. The object of the Bill is to enable the Boards of Guardians to deal in proper cases directly with the labourers. I hope the Committee will allow the Bill to be passed, particularly as at this season of the year it is desirable that steps should be at once taken.

(12.11.) MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: The right hon. Gentleman has not given me a reply to my question.

*MR. MADDEN: This clause does not open the general question of the Seed Potatoes Act, and I, therefore, should be out of order in discussing the point raised by the hon. Member.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: The Government have control over the administration of the Act ——

THE CHAIRMAN: That is not relevant to this clause.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported, without Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a third time."—(*Mr. Madden.*)

*(12.13.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): Before the Bill is read a third time I should like to draw attention to the extraordinary fact that the Minister for Ireland—the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant—is not present in his place when this important and urgent measure, which so particularly applies to Ireland, is being brought forward.

DR. TANNER: I would point out that the Bill is intended to supply seed potatoes to labourers, and as the season is advancing the sooner the potatoes are got in the better.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

ELECTORS REGISTRATION (ACCELERATION) (RE-COMMITTED) BILL. (No. 234.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

SUPPLY—ARMY ESTIMATES.

Resolution [5th March] reported.

"That a sum, not exceeding £5,632,700, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the Charge of the Pay, Allowances, and other Charges of Her Majesty's Army at Home and Abroad (exclusive of India) (General Staff, Regiments, Reserve, and Departments), which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892."

(12.17.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I desire to ask what the Government propose to do with regard to the Island of St. Helena? Is it intended to retain a force there? This will have an important bearing on a question I intend to raise later on, as to the continuance of Ascension Island as a military station. The Royal Commission on Colonial Defences, four years ago, recommended that the force at St. Helena should be retained, but that a force should not be retained at Ascension Island. A considerable amount has been expended on the force at St. Helena, but subsequently that policy was changed, and now there has been a second change of policy.

(12.19.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): There has been no change of policy. We are endeavouring to raise a local Militia at St. Helena. We have not done it yet, but as soon as we have done it we propose to reduce the garrison of Imperial forces.

(12.20.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Is it not a fact that for two years attempts have been made to raise a Militia at St. Helena, but that, practically, there are no able-bodied men in the Island, all the people having gone to the African gold fields?

(12.21.) MR. E. STANHOPE: That is the position of those who do not want to see the Militia regiment raised. We do wish to see it raised, and think it possible to do it.

Resolution agreed to.

PENAL SERVITUDE BILL.—(No. 192.)

Order for Committee read, and discharged.

Bill committed to the Standing Committee on Law, &c.

ARMY ANNUAL BILL.—(No. 240.)

Read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.
(No. 40.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I do not wish to impede the progress of the Bill, but I desire to point out that I have consulted the Law Officer of the Crown as to whether that for which provision is made in this clause can not be done under the terms of the original Act. I hold the opinion that it could—that under the existing law fees can be paid by County Councils as proposed—and my view has been supported by those legal authorities. Doubts seem to exist in the minds of the County Councils as to the working of the Act. Therefore, I leave the matter in the hands of the Committee. If hon. Members and the County Councils think these provisions necessary, I am not prepared to insist on their removal from the Bill.

MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham): The original difficulty and doubt as to this subject was raised not by the County Councils, but came from another quarter. The doubt has become so wide-spread amongst many County Councils that I think it desirable to pass this measure. I hope the right hon Gentleman will allow these words to remain.

MR. BRUNNER (Cheshire, Northwich): It can do no harm to allow this Bill to go forward this stage. If it is necessary to alter the terms of this clause at a later stage the alteration can be made.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered to-morrow.

TEACHERS' REGISTRATION BILL.
(No. 48.)

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on question [18th February], "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Question again proposed.

MR. A. H. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham): An hon. Member has objected to this Bill being proceeded with after 12 o'clock, but I would appeal to him to withdraw his objection so that the Bill can be read a second time and referred to the Select Committee, to which a Bill of a somewhat similar character has already been referred. By reading it a second time the House will not affirm its principle.

Qustion put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Select Committee on Teachers' (Registration and Organisation) Bill.

MUSEUMS AND GYMNASIUMS BILL.
(No. 159.)

Bill read the third time, and passed.

House adjourned at half after
Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 10th March, 1891.

TITHE RENTCHARGE RECOVERY BILL—(No. 38).

Reported from the Standing Committee with further Amendments: The Report of the Amendments made in Committee of the whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 55.)

RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Commons Message considered (according to order).

Moved, "That this House do concur in the following Resolution communicated by the Commons," namely—

> "That all Bills of the present Session to confirm Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade, under the 'Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888,' containing the classification of merchandise traffic, and the schedule of maximum rates and charges applicable thereto, be referred to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons."—(*The Lord Balfour.*)

Agreed to; and a Message sent to the Commons to acquaint them therewith.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (BLIND AND DEAF) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 43).

Amendments reported (according to order).

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK): My Lords, I beg to move the Amendments which stand in my name. They are in

> Clause 11, page 4, line 4, after ("regards,") insert ("its"), and after ("school") insert ("or institution"); leave out all after ("jurisdiction") in line 10 to ("and that") in line 13; after line 15 insert—"(2) In determining the amount of such reasonable weekly sum to be paid by the parent, the Court shall take into consideration the means of the parent, and any special circumstances affecting the particular case, and, if the child be of like condition with the children attending the public elementary schools of the neighbourhood, then the ordinary weekly fee charged in such schools"; lines 16 and 17, leave out ("this order") and insert ("any order made under this Section").

*LORD NORTON: My Lords, I desire to say a few words in explanation of an Amendment which I have upon the one proposed by the noble Lord the Lord President of the Council after line 15, which perhaps may induce him to think that the wording of this Amendment must be altered. The Amendment proposes that in determining the weekly amount to be paid by the parent—

> "The Court shall take into consideration the means of the parent and any special circumstances,"

those must be, I suppose, the parents condition as labourers or tradesmen, and the blindness of the child; and then it provides that—

> "If the child be of like condition with the children attending the public elementary schools of the neighbourhood,"

the parent is to pay the ordinary weekly fee charged in such schools. Now, there may be many conditions of children attending any elementary school. In almost all rural schools there are the children of labourers and of tradesmen and farmers, and there are different classes also in towns. I propose, therefore; instead of those words—

> "If the child be of like condition with the children attending the public elementary schools,"

to insert—

> "The fee charged for a blind or deaf child at such school or institution shall not exceed the maximum fee paid for children of like condition at public elementary schools of the neighbourhood."

That I think would take in all the conditions.

*VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: My noble Friend will misunderstand the mode in which my clause is drawn. There is no such provision in it as he apparently supposes. What is provided in the Amendment I propose is this: that in determining the amount to be paid the Court shall take into consideration certain circumstances because they will have to deal with children of all classes, but that if the child be of like condition with those attending the public elementary schools in the place, then, in addition to all the special circumstances, they are to take into consideration the fee ordinarily charged; not that they are to make the parent of that child pay a particular fee, for the child may be one who in the ordinary course would be exempted, but they are to fix the weekly sum including maintenance, education, and other things, for which they think the parent ought to pay. Where it is a case in which the child would otherwise go to an ordinary school they will take into consideration what the payment in that ordinary school would be, and then, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the case, make the parent pay what they consider a proper weekly sum, such as he can afford. My noble Friend seems to read it as laying down what the Courts are to do in regard only to one particular thing, which of course would make the clause altogether nonsense. They are to determine a reasonable sum to be paid for the whole thing, taking into consideration all those circumstances, and then, when the child is of a particular class, that is of like condition with the children attending the public elementary schools in the neighbourhood, also the question of the ordinary weekly fee charged in those schools.

*Lord NORTON: I cannot understand that the "ordinary fee" means the fee which any parent can pay for extraordinary education. However, after what the noble Lord has said I beg to withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

Original Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read 3^a on Thursday next; and to be printed as amended. (No.56.)

MUSEUMS AND GYMNASIUMS BILL—(No. 57.)

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) ACT, 1890, AMENDMENT BILL—(No. 58.)

Brought from the Commons; read 1^a, and to be printed.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 10th March, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

SOUTH KENSINGTON AND PADDINGTON SUBWAY BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Order read for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [9th March],

"That the South Kensington and Paddington Subway Bill be committed to the Committee of Selection be read, and discharged, and that the Bill be referred to a Select Committee of Nine Members, Five to be nominated by the House and Four by the Committee of Selection."—(*Mr. Baumann.*)

Question again proposed.

*Sir J. PULESTON (Devonport): It may, perhaps, save time if I say that there is no desire on the part of the promoters of the Bill to oppose the Motion of my hon. Friend. Notice of opposition was given yesterday simply because the Motion was seen on the Paper for the first time, and it was thought desirable than an opportunity should be afforded for looking into it.

Mr. BAUMANN (Camberwell, Peckham): I am glad to hear the remarks of my hon. Friend.

Question put, and agreed to.

Ordered, That all Petitions against the Bill presented Seven clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents, be heard against the Bill, and Counsel heard in support of the Bill.

Ordered, That the Committeee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.—(*Mr. Baumann.*)

NAVY (FLASHING SIGNALS).

Copy ordered—

"Of the whole Official Correspondence relating to Rear Admiral Colomb, from the year 1867 to the present date, and further Official Correspondence relating to Admiral Colomb's System of Flashing Signals between the years 1861 and 1867, also since that date; to include the Letter from the Treasury to the Admiralty, offering to give Admiral Colomb £2,000, and Admiral Colomb's Reply thereto."—(*Admiral Mayne.*)

QUESTIONS.

INCREASE OF DEATHS IN INDIA.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been called to the great increase of deaths in India during the years 1886-8, and especially to the increase of deaths from fever; and in view of this great increase in the fever death rate, the Government will consider the duty of taking steps to promote better conditions of health among the people?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.) for the

UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The statistics will be found at page 268 of the Statistical Abstract. They do not show a progressive increase in each year in the total number of deaths or in the number of deaths from fever, which latter depend in a great measure on the season. It should be remembered that the system of registration of vital statistics is being steadily improved, and, that, as the improvement continues, a steady increase in the number of registered deaths may be expected. Sanitary reforms are attempted, so far as the means and the sentiment of the native population permit it. In the rural tracts progress is necessarily slower than in the towns. The question is engaging the constant attention of the Secretary of State and the Governor of India.

MR. CONYBEARE: Can the right hon. Baronet say whether the deaths from 1886 to 1888 from fever were in excess of those of the bad years from 1870 to 1879?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: I have no detailed information on that point, but it is the fact that deaths from fever were very numerous in 1887, when there was a very heavy rainfall, and that they were lower in the next year—1888.

PRICE OF SALT IN INDIA.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether, in the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay, the price of salt has risen from nine annas and eight annas per maund in 1800 to R2.11 and R2.8 in 1890, respectively; (2) whether he can state the facts as to increase or otherwise in the price of salt for the other Presidencies during the same period; (3) whether in India the average consumption of salt per head for all purposes is only 10lb., while in the United Kingdom it is 72lb.; (4) whether it is a fact that leprosy has also increased during the same period; and (5) whether the Government will direct the especial attention of the Medical Commission on Leprosy now in India to an investigation of the apparent connection between the want of cheap salt and the spread of leprosy?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: The answer to the first question is in the affirmative as regards Madras, but the Secretary of State cannot state the price of salt in Bombay at the beginning of the century. The Secretary of State cannot give the information asked for in the second question for the earlier years of the century; but if the hon. Member wishes it, the Secretary of State can place at his disposal statistics going back to 1841. The answer to the third question is that the average consumption of salt in India varies from 8lbs. to 18lbs. in the various Provinces. For all India it is 11lbs. The reply to the fourth question is that there is no certain information as to the increase of leprosy. Lepers were counted at the Census of 1881, but the results of the Census taken last year are not known. As to the last question, I have to say that the Medical Commission, now sitting, will doubtless consider the question of the connection which has been said to exist between insufficient salt and the prevalence of leprosy.

MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): May I ask the right hon. Baronet if the increase in leprosy is not owing to the increase in the taxation of salt? Was not the taxation of salt reduced in Lord Ripon's time?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I have just explained that there is no certain information as to the increase of leprosy. Lord Ripon's Government did reduce the duty on salt.

MR. MAC NEILL: Is the right hon. Baronet aware that two native gentlemen, members of the Viceroy's Council, have protested in the strongest terms against this taxation of salt?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I am afraid that I cannot answer that question.

ARRESTS IN INDIA.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India (1) how many persons have been arrested on suspicion and imprisoned without trial or deported under Regulation III. of 1818 since that date to the present time; (2) whether the said Regulation is printed in any of the official records of the India Office; and (3) why it has never been embodied in the Indian Penal Code?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: In answer to the first question of the hon. Member I have to say that the Secretary of State has not the information asked for. Regulation III. of 1818 does not authorise deportation. The reply to the second question is Yes—Parliamentary Return No. 59, of the 20th of February, 1821. So far as the third question is concerned, I may say that the subjects of the Code and Regulation are entirely distinct.

MR. CONYBEARE: Upon that answer may I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether I did not understand him to say yesterday, in answer to a question of mine, that Mr. Henry Silk Buckingham was deported under Regulation III.?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Nothing of the kind. I said that Abdul Rasul left India at his own wish.

MR. CONYBEARE: The question which I put to the right hon. Gentleman yesterday bearing upon this matter was whether Sheikh Abdul Rasul had not been deported under the same Regulation as applied to the case of Mr. Henry Silk Buckingham in 1818. What I want to know is this; if Regulation 3 of 1818 does not authorise deportation, under what Regulation was Sheikh Abdul Rasul deported, his declaration being that he was deported against his will?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I am informed that Abdul Rasul was not deported.

Subsequently,

MR. CONYBEARE said: There is one point in the question, upon which I wish to ask a further question, namely, how many persons have been arrested on suspicion and imprisoned without trial or deported under Regulation III. of 1818, since that date to the present time? I think I understood the answer of the right hon. Gentleman to be that the Regulation did not authorise deportation, I do not ask for names and particulars but can the right hon. Gentleman give me the number of persons who have been imprisoned during a certain period without trial merely on suspicion?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I think I have stated that no information has been furnished me, and that the Secretary of State is no in possession of the information asked for.

MR. CONYBEARE: Could not the right hon. Gentleman get the information?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I will inform the Secretary of State of the wish of the hon. Gentleman.

RE-ADDRESSED LETTERS.

MR. ATKINSON (Boston): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will give the same privilege in future to Britons as to re-addressing of letters, &c., which he now gives to foreigners?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): Letters transmitted by post between countries of the Postal Union are exempt from charge for re-direction under the Regulations of the Postal Union Convention. The hon. Member must be aware that the Postmaster General has no authority or power to remit charges producing revenue without the sanction of the Treasury.

MR. ATKINSON: I beg to give notice that I will move a Resolution on the subject.

EVICTION OF A CROFTER.

DR. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been drawn to a paragraph in the *Oban Times* of 28th February, *re* the eviction of Coll Macdougall, a blacksmith and crofter on the Soroba estate, near Oban, from which it appears that Macdougall owed no rent; that in the absence of Macdougall, his wife and young family were obliged, on account of the wind and rain, to forcibly re-enter the house during the night to shield them from the severe weather, and are now suffering from the effects of the exposure; whether Macdougall was made a notour bankrupt, and so put beyond the benefits of the Crofters' Act, through a series of lawsuits (the costs of which he was unable to pay) raised against him by the trustee on the estate, in conjunction with the tenant of the same, to whose farm the croft on which Macdougall was born is now to be annexed; and whether he can take any action in the matter on behalf of the evicted family?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I have seen the paragraph in the *Oban Times* referred to in the question, and from inquiry I have made, it appears that the statements are very inaccurate. The eviction took place in virtue of a decree obtained from the Sheriff in an action which Macdougall defended. He was in arrears of rent for a piece of ground which he at one time held, and he had not paid the rent due at Martinmas last. Macdougall was at work when the proceedings began, but came back before they were concluded.

He refused the offer of a house in Oban which was made to him by the agent who undertook to be responsible for the rent till Whitsunday, and he forcibly re-entered the house the same day. I am informed that the weather was fine on the day the eviction took place, and it is not known that his wife and family are suffering exposure. In 1887 Macdougall was a notour bankrupt. In consequence of his taking forcible possession of a piece of ground upon the estate of Soroba, the proprietors were obliged to raise an action of interdict against him, which was opposed, and, after considerable litigation and expense, perpetual interdict was granted, and he was found liable in expenses, and again in 1889 he was found liable in expenses in another action of interdict which he also defended. I do not see any grounds for interference on the part of the Crown Authorities.

ARMY CONTRACTS—PROVISIONS.

MR. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether there is any foundation for the report that frozen meat badly preserved, or of inferior quality, supplied to soldiers at Colchester, and other garrisons, has given considerable dissatisfaction; and whether he would consider the advisability of supplying the Army with fresh killed meat, which is obtainable in Great Britain and Ireland at from 4d. to 6d. per pound?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): No recent complaints have been received on the subject of frozen meat, and none whatever as regards frozen mutton. Frozen beef is not now issued to the Army, although some refrigerated beef is, as it enables the Authorities to issue to the troops some of the best procurable beef. But, whenever due regard to economy admits of it, I shall always try to give the preference to home-grown meat of good quality.

CYPRUS.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can inform the House what is now the sum total of money derived from the taxation of Cyprus under the name of Turkish Tribute and applied towards the payment of the interest on the Crimean Loan guaranteed by England and France, and what is the amount of the surplus in the hands of Her Majesty's Government; and whether the Government have still under their consideration the expediency of capitalising the Turkish Tribute, and of thus relieving the inhabitants of Cyprus from heavy taxation?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I am hopeless as to explaining the question of the Turkish Tribute in its relation to Cyprus to my hon. Friend. When Cyprus was taken over the payment of a Tribute amounting to something like £90,000 was made a condition of the transfer of Cyprus. It is an engagement to Turkey, and an engagement which cannot be broken for the sake of lightening the taxation of Cyprus. On the other hand, Turkey has to find the interest on the Crimean Loan guaranteed by England and France, and the bulk of the Tribute is applied to that purpose; if not applied to that purpose, it would have to be handed over to the Porte, and no part could be remitted in the interests of the taxpayers of Cyprus. The Tribute is, as my hon. Friend is aware, charged on the Revenues of Cyprus, which Revenues have also got to meet the cost of administration. The Revenues are insufficient for that purpose, and a grant in aid has annually to be made. It is, therefore, difficult to say how much Cyprus pays towards the Tribute; it is assisted in that payment by the grant in aid made by this country. The question of capitalising the Tribute is still under the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, but no great anticipations of large relief to the inhabitants of Cyprus ought to be formed as the result of a capitalisation.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: Can my right hon. Friend tell me how much money has come from Cyprus, and what is the amount of the surplus now laid up in the Treasury?

MR. GOSCHEN: The surplus laid up in the Treasury has been held back as applicable to a Sinking Fund on the guaranteed amount.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: What is the amount?

MR. GOSCHEN: I cannot state the exact amount; but I think it is something like £50,000 or £60,000. It is an accumulation since the beginning. It is impossible to separate what Cyprus pays in tribute and what in other ways.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I beg to give notice that I will call attention to the question on the Estimates.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether a sum of £92,000 a year is still charged, under the head of Turkish Tribute, upon the taxpayers of Cyprus, and is still applied by the British Government towards the payment of the interest on the Crimean Loan guaranteed by England and France; and whether there is any precedent in any other colony or dependency under the Colonial Office for a charge over and above the costs of administration being levied out of the local taxation and applied to Imperial purposes?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The answer to the first part of my hon. Friend's question is Yes. The second part is argumentative, and appears to be framed under some misapprehension. Cyprus is not a British Colony or under the sovereignty of the Queen; but it is occupied and administered under special arrangement with the Sultan, with which my hon. Friend is, no doubt, familiar. I may, however, observe that there are many cases in which some annuity is paid out of the Revenues of a British Colony to the former ruler or his descendants, in compensation for the loss of income arising from the cession.

JAMAICA.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the existing railways of Jamaica described in a Despatch of His Excellency the Governor "as a good and paying property," have been handed over to an American Syndicate, together with a grant of 100,000 acres of land, and the right to make railway extensions to Montego Bay and Port Antonio; whether these conditions had the previous sanction of the Colonial Office; and whether he will lay the terms of the concession upon the Table of the House?

CAPTAIN PRICE (Devonport): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Jamaica Railway was constructed with money raised under a Government guarantee of 4 per cent. interest, which interest has hitherto been paid out of the earnings of the railway; also on what terms does the Jamaica Government propose to acquire the 100 square miles of land to be handed over to the railway syndicate?

BARON H. DE WORMS: In 1889 the Jamaica Government Railway was sold to a company incorporated in the colony, and brought out by an American Syndicate. As a part of the conditions of the sale, the syndicate undertook to construct extensions of the railway to Montego Bay and Port Antonio for which they were to receive a square mile of land for every mile of the extension. The Secretary of State, without expressing approval of the scheme, considered that it should be left to the decision of the Colonial Legislature. Papers, including a copy of the Colonial Law under which the sale was made, and which sets out in a schedule all the conditions, will be presented to Parliament. I would also refer my hon. and gallant Friend to the very full reply given to him by me on the 27th of June, 1889, which contains the answer to the question which he now repeats.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE PATENT OFFICE.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he will direct the attention of Her Majesty's Minister in the United States of America to the fact that, while complete sets of the publications of the British Patent Office are presented to 12 of the most important cities in those States, a corresponding number of sets of the publications of the United States Patent Office are not sent to similar cities in this country, and that inventors in Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle, Dundee, Belfast, and other cities are put to the inconvenience of visiting London to consult the only set of United States Patent Office publications accessible to them in this country?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): I am requested by my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for

Foreign Affairs to say that it is believed that the fact is as stated, but the matter is one which concerns the Board of Trade. The publications of the British Patent Office referred to in the hon. Member's question are not presented in consequence of any application made through the diplomatic channel from the Government or authorities of the United States. No application has been made to the Foreign Office to request from the United States Government copies of their publications in exchange.

TORPEDO BUOYS AT SHOEBURYNESS.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that great inconvenience and loss is occasioned to Essex fishermen by the placing of torpedo buoys, wires, and chains, fastened together near the surface, on Sheerness Middle Ground, of Garrison Point, Shoeburyness, and whether he will consider the possibility of removing them if compatible with the interests of the public?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: A comparatively small area of 150 acres is buoyed off for a few weeks at Sheerness in order that the Regular and Militia Submarine Miners may have their necessary practice. It is possible that some inconvenience and loss are occasioned to fishermen, but my hon. and gallant Friend must be one of the first to be aware that this practice is essential in the interests of the Public Service.

FATAL RAILWAY ACCIDENT.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to a fatal accident to a girl, on the 19th February, by a passing train at the Butler's Hill crossing on the Nottingham and Mansfield branch of the Midland Railway; whether he is aware that there is a heavy mineral and passenger traffic at this crossing, which is a frequently used public footpath; and whether, by the erection of a bridge or other means, the safety of the public can be secured?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): Yes, Sir; and I have communicated with the Midland Railway Company, and am informed that the immediate proximity of the Great Northern Railway at the Butler's Hill level crossing renders the co-operation of that company necessary for any remedial work, and that the engineers of the two companies have been instructed to prepare for the consideration of the Directors the necessary plans and drawings for a bridge to carry the footpath in question over both railways.

THE BURIAL ACT.

Mr. CALEB WRIGHT (Lancashire, S.W., Leigh): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that, notwithstanding his expression of opinion to the Reverend W. J. Melville, Rector of Holy Trinity, Ashton-in-Mackerfield, Lancashire, that such an instruction is contrary to the spirit of the Burial Act of 1880, the bills issued in connection with interments in the churchyard still contain the instruction that breadths or graves are

> "appropriated only on condition that no other than the Church of England service is ever used";

and whether, in view of the fact that the inhabitants of the parish are deterred from availing themselves of the provisions of the Act of 1880, steps will be taken to prevent such a limitation of the rights of the parishioners?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): The opinion which I expressed to the Rector on a former occasion was to the effect that it appeared contrary to the spirit of the Act to stipulate beforehand that a grave where a Church service is used shall be in any respect superior to other graves. The Rector then assured me that this is not the case, and he now repeats this assurance. The Rector, however, still insists on his right to select the part of the churchyard where any interment shall take place, and denies any obligation to sell or appropriate graves to any families or individuals to the exclusion of others. This is a question of law, as to which I have stated before it is not my duty to express an opinion. The Rector informs me that no dissatisfaction has been expressed among his parishioners, and that the provisions of the Act of 1880 are always loyally carried out by him.

WELSH COLLIERIES.

Mr. DAVID THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the increasing practice in Welsh steam coal collieries of winding large quantities of coal through the upcast shaft; and whether, in view of the fact that this practice materially interferes with the ventilation and safety of the mine, he will take steps to insure that proper precautions, such as passing the trams through double doors at the surface, are taken?

Mr. MATTHEWS: My attention has been called to this practice. There has been very slight increase in its application during the last four years. The Inspector reports that the practice does not materially interfere with the ventilation and safety of the mine in any of the cases where it is in operation in the South Wales district, and that the cages used in the upcast shafts fill the mouth of the shaft. The Inspectors will take care that the adoption of this practice, which is not contrary to the Coal Mines Act, does not interfere with the adequate ventilation of the mine under the first General Rule.

Mr. D. THOMAS; Does the Inspector approve of the practice?

Mr. MATTHEWS: He says that it is not desirable it should be extended?

Mr. DAVID THOMAS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will again direct the particular attention of Mine Inspectors to Rule 39 in the General Rules under "The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887," relating to the employment of inexperienced workmen underground, which Rule it is alleged is being constantly broken?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I stated last year that if the hon. Member would bring to my notice any instance of disregard of the Rule I would do all in my power, by issuing instructions to the Inspectors to secure its proper observance. I have referred the hon. Member's question to the Inspector for the South Wales district, and he states that while the Rule is an exceedingly difficult one for managers to enforce, owing to misrepresentations sometimes made by colliers seeking employment, yet he is constantly making inquiry, and has no reason at all to suppose that it is being constantly broken. As a matter of fact, in his district a very small proportion of coal getters work singly.

IMPERIAL TAXATION.

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what sum is contributed by land to Imperial taxation, stating the amount received from each source separately, and the percentage which the whole bears to the total of Imperial taxation?

Mr. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member asks me to embody information on an extremely difficult and complicated subject within the limits of an answer across the floor of the House. There are, however, no existing Returns which give the information for which he asks.

INHABITED HOUSE DUTY.

Mr. FOLJAMBE (Notts, Mansfield): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the case of a working man named William Purdy, of Eastwood, in Nottinghamshire, who, while living in a house for which he had never paid more than 6s. a week rent, was assessed for Inhabited House Duty, and, despite his explanations, and before a promised survey of the premises, had a distraint issued on his goods in August, 1889, for the amount of duty demanded; whether a second demand for Inhabited House Duty was made in 1890, and a second distraint only avoided by the payment of the amount claimed, by a neighbour anxious to prevent the disturbance likely to arise; whether, in all, 23s. for duty claimed, and 5s. 6d. for expenses, have been received in respect of this assessment, since declared unjust by the Commissioners; and whether he will request the Inland Revenue Authorities to refund the money?

Mr. GOSCHEN: Two applications were made to Mr. Purdy in the year 1888-89 for a return of the annual value of his house. These applications remaining unnoticed the Local Commissioners of Taxes fixed the assessment at £23, taking the gross poor rate as a basis of charge. Notice of charge and the date when he could appeal were given to Mr. Purdy, but no communication was received from him in reply, and in the absence of an appeal the assessment was confirmed. No promise was made by the Surveyor of Taxes to go over the premises, but the Surveyor told Mr. Purdy that if he would send in a written notice of appeal he would probably go and look at the premises before the meeting of the Commissioners. No such notice, however, was received, and, as Mr. Purdy refused payment after repeated applications, the amount had to be recovered by distraint. For the year 1889-90 the Charge was continued, but allowed to stand over till an opportunity of appeal had been given to Mr. Purdy. A notice was sent to him that the Commissioners would meet on August 22 last; but as he failed to put in an appearance, the Commissioners again confirmed the assessment, and the duty was only paid after threat of distraint. With regard to the assessment for the current year, Mr. Purdy appealed on November 21 last, and the Commissioners granted relief. For the two years ended April 5, 1890, Mr. Purdy has paid 23s. duty, and 5s. 6d. in respect of expenses of levy as stated. As regards the last paragraph of the hon. Member's question, I must inform him that the House Duty Acts make no provision for revising assessments in respect of past years; and if Mr. Purdy has paid duty to which he was not liable, this has been caused by his refusal to send in the value of his house or to appeal.

THE RIVER CONGO.

MR. WHITLEY (Liverpool, Everton): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to a statement in the *Times* of 2nd March, to the effect that the majority of the trading firms on the River Congo have removed from the territory of the Congo State to Portuguese territory, in consequence of the heavy taxes and other impediments placed in the way of traders by the Congo State; and also to a letter in the *Journal des Débats* of 2nd March, stating that a military expedition of some magnitude has been sent into the interior to lay waste the entire country from Kwamouth; and, if so, what action Her Majesty's Government propose to take in the matter?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: As to the first question, duties have recently been fixed by an arrangement between France, Portugal, and the Congo State under the provisions of the Declaration annexed to the Brussels Act. Differential treatment is prohibited by the Berlin Act. We are not aware whether the statement is correct. We have, at any rate, not heard of the transfer of British traders to Portuguese territory. As to the second question, we understand that the statement in the *Débats* is contradicted by the Congo Free State. Her Majesty's Government do not propose to act on unsubstantiated newspaper reports.

REGENTS PARK.

MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if he will permit bathing in the ornamental lake in Regent's Park before 8 o'clock in the morning during the summer months?

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): The proposal to allow bathing in the Regent's Park has more than once been fully considered, but it has always been rejected, mainly on the ground that the ornamental water is so close to inhabited houses.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: Are there not convenient places about the islands free from the objection?

MR. PLUNKET: The hon. Member cannot have inspected the place as carefully as I have on more than one occasion, or he would have found that there is no spot on the ornamental water free from the objection I have named.

ALLOTMENTS.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that an application for allotments under the Act of 1887 has been made to the Local Board of Charlton Kings by the labourers of Ryeworth; that the Local Board have been unable to supply the demand owing to the unwillingness of the owner of the only suitable land in the locality; and that the said land is now offered for sale; and, if so, whether he will advise the Local Board to purchase it, or such part of it as they may think fit, for the purpose of supplying the applicants with allotments?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): Prior to the notice of the question of my hon. Friend I had received no information with regard to the application for allotments at Charlton Kings. I have communicated with the Local Board, and have received a letter, from which it appears that an application was made to them for allotments by several individuals resident at Ryeworth. The Local Board proceeded to make inquiries with regard to the applicants, and they found that almost all of them were already provided with allotments or garden grounds. It is not stated in the communication which I have received that the Local Board have been unable to supply the demand owing to the unwillingness of the owner of the only suitable land in the locality, but I am informed that since the last meeting of the Local Board a communication has been received by them, in which it is stated that a portion of the land known as Ryeworth field is to be offered for sale in the present month, and suggesting that the Local Board should exercise their powers with regard to this field. This communication was to be considered by the Local Board at their meeting today. The Local Government Board have no such information as to the facts as would enable them to make any recommendation to the Local Board as regards this particular field, and as, in the event of its purchase, application would, no doubt, be made to the Board for sanction to a loan, and a local inquiry would be necessary, it would not be expedient that they should do so.

GRIEVANCES OF PRISON OFFICIALS.

MR. BEAUFOY (Lambeth, Kennington): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an inquiry is about to be held into the grievances of prison officials; and whether this inquiry will include the grievances of warder schoolmasters?

MR. MATTHEWS: An inquiry is now being held, and it includes the grievances of all classes of warders.

NATIONAL GALLERY OF BRITISH ART.

MR. QUILTER (Suffolk, Sudbury): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether he can say what arrangements have been made for the provision of a suitable building for the new National Gallery of British Art?

MR. PLUNKET: The question of providing a suitable building for the new Gallery of British Art has been for some time engaging the careful consideration of the Government, and it is hoped that a satisfactory scheme may soon be agreed upon.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): What arrangements have been made for the reception of works of art?

MR. PLUNKET: It would be better not to enter into that subject at present. I hope to be able to make a fuller statement in a short time.

INCOME TAX.

DR. McDONALD: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has been informed that the notices for distraint in reference to the payment of Income Tax, which he referred to last week as having been issued without instructions, and further issue of which had been forbidden, still continues to be issued after he had made this statement in the House; whether such notices are printed by Government printers, and distributed to the various collectors who make use of them; whether he is aware that they are delivered at houses without being in envelopes or folded up in any way, and consequently are open to the inspection of servants, or to that of visitors, when thrust under the doors; and can collectors distrain for taxes at any time after 1st January, even if the ordinary demand note has not been received by the taxpayer?

MR. GOSCHEN: My answer to the first question is No. My answer to the second question is No. One collector had irregular notices privately printed in ignorance of the rules; but only such notices can be issued as have been prepared or approved by the Board of Inland Revenue. I think there is some confusion with regard to these notices. The hon. Member for the Uxbridge Division put a notice in my hands which was irregular, but the hon. Member who asks me this question has sent me one which is perfectly regular, but which, perhaps, he believed fell into the same class as that which was unauthorised. The notice sent me by the hon. Member was issued in March to a club which, I presume, was perfectly competent to pay. The amount was due on the 1st January, and the notice complained of was sent out in March, and it was then stated that if the amount was not paid steps would be taken for putting in force the provision of the Taxes Management Act, 1880, for the recovery of arrears of taxes. If, after two months' grace, such notices were not issued, it is difficult to see how the tax would be collected within the financial year. There is no legal obligation on collectors to enclose the authorised demand notes in respect of duties in envelopes. With regard to the last question, the law does not compel collectors to issue demand notes after the notice of charge has been served in the autumn, but they are generally, I might say, almost universally made use of. As the law now stands, collectors can distrain any time after the 1st of January, when the tax is due, provided that one personal application has been made to the taxpayer for payment.

MRS. MARY CATHCART.

DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with reference to the seizure of Mrs. Mary Cathcart, if he is aware that the lady was seized by four servants of a Private Lunatic Asylum within the jurisdiction of the Law Courts, when she was there for the purpose of pursuing an action in one of the Courts; whether such seizure amounts to contempt of Court; if he will state whether it is legal to seize any person under what is called an "urgency order," and confine the said person in a lunatic asylum before any medical examination has been made, or any medical certificate signed for his or her detention; and whether he will give an order for the examination of Mrs. Cathcart by two independent medical men?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Lunacy Commissioners that Mrs. Cathcart was taken in the Strand outside the Law Courts. It is a matter entirely for the Court itself to determine whether there has been any contempt of Court. The hon. Member will see from the Lunacy Act, 1890, that prior to an urgency order there must be a medical certificate. I am informed that this enactment was complied with. There has since been a Justice's order founded on two medical certificates, A Lunacy Commissioner has visited Mrs. Cathcart in the asylum, and has reported that she is a fit subject for asylum treatment. A medical man employed by her mother has also visited her, and has advised that she is of unsound mind, and that the existing arrangements for her treatment should not be interfered with. I am not aware of any reason which should induce me to order an examination of the patient under Section 205 of the Lunacy Act.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

MR. BIGWOOD (Middlesex, Brentford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he could inform the House whether a Justice of the Peace who is on the Commission of the Peace for a county in England, and is duly qualified by estate, and has taken the Oath of Estate and made and subscribed the Declaration of Office, is subject to any penalty for acting as Justice of the Peace at a Court of Quarter or General Sessions by reason of his having no residence within the county; and can any valid legal objection be made to a Justice so acting on the ground that he is not resident within the county? I have also to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he can inform the House whether there is anything to prevent a Justice of the County of Middlesex, who is duly qualified by estate, and who was appointed a Magistrate of Middlesex prior to "The Local Government Act, 1888," continuing to act at Quarter Sessions as a Magistrate for Middlesex, notwithstanding the fact that his place of residence and qualification, which was in the County of Middlesex, has become by virtue of the provisions of "The Local Government Act, 1888," now within the County of London?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am advised that the answer to these questions of my hon. Friend is in the negative. The power to act as a Middlesex Justice, although there is no Middlesex residence, is confined to those persons who were qualified Middlesex Justices when the Local Government Act passed.

INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS BILL.

Mr. STEPHENS (Middlesex, Hornsey): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether a Paper, containing various statements in support of the Inflammable Liquids Bill, printed at the Foreign Office on the 2nd of this month, but presenting no other indication of its origin, has been issued upon his authority; and, if not, whether the Paper may nevertheless be accepted as an official Memorandum of explanation in support of the Inflammable Liquids Bill?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; the Memorandum mentioned by my hon. Friend was prepared by my authority, and may be treated as a short and explanatory statement upon certain points on which information appeared to be desired. A much fuller Memorandum, as I have already stated, will shortly be laid upon the Table of the House.

TELEGRAMS TO AUSTRALIA.

Mr. HENNIKER HEATON (Canterbury): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the cost per word for British Government telegrams from England to Australia; what amount was paid during each of the past two financial years for Government telegrams to Australia; and whether the expenses incurred in telegraphing to Australia, in reference to the appointment of the Governor of Queensland, vice Sir Anthony Musgrave, was taken out of last year's Financial Vote or the Vote in a previous year?

Baron H. de WORMS: To South Australia, Victoria, and Western Australia, 7s. 1d. per word; to New South Wales, 7s. 3d.; to Queensland, 9s. 9d.; to Tasmania, 9s. 11d.; to New Zealand, 10s. 6d. The second question could not be precisely answered without long examination. It is roughly estimated that the cost of the telegrams sent from the Colonial Office to Australasia during the past two years has averaged £700 a year. As regards the third question, many, but it cannot certainly be said all, the telegrams sent from hence on that subject were paid for out of the Vote for 1888-9.

METROPOLITAN VOLUNTEER RIFLE RANGES.

Captain PENTON (Finsbury, Central): I had intended to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the acknowledged deciency of rifle ranges accessible to Metropolitan Volunteer Regiments, his attention has been called to the fact that a company has been formed with the object of establishing rifle ranges available for Metropolitan and other corps near Staines; and whether the scheme has his sanction or approval? But at the request of the right hon. Gentleman I will postpone the question until Monday.

THE NEW MAGAZINE RIFLE.

Captain PENTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can inform the House when, where, and by whom the new magazine rifle has been tested for range, and with what result?

***Mr. E. STANHOPE**: The new magazine rifle was tested for range in August last at Romney Hoy by the Committee on Explosives. The extreme range was found to be about 3,500yds.

THE VACCINATION COMMISSION.

Mr. T. ROBINSON (Gloucester): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he will consent to appoint some one to take the place of the late Mr. Bradlaugh upon the Royal Commission on Vaccination?

***Mr. RITCHIE**: It is my intention to propose the appointment of a member of the Royal Commission on Vaccination to take the place of the late Mr. Bradlaugh.

TRINCOMALEE.

Mr. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether it has been decided by Her Majesty's Government what proportion of the expense of maintaining the forts and garrison of Trincomalee is to be borne by Ceylon, and what proportion by the Imperial Government?

Baron H. de WORMS: No final decision has yet been arrived at, and no statement can be made on the subject until a communication has been made to the Colonial Government.

THE ECCLESIASTICAL COMMISSIONERS.

Mr. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been called (as, *ex officio*, an Ecclesiastical Commissioner) to the On-Licences Return just presented to the House (Blue Book, No. 28); whether it is true, as appears in that Return that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are owners of a large number of licensed premises, *e.g.*, 24 in Finsbury (p. 42); 10 in Newington (p. 45); 2 in St. Pancras (p. 46); 9 in the Tower (p. 48); 2 in Kensington (p. 50); and 2 in Highgate (p. 50); will he inform the House what is the whole number of licensed houses in the country which they (the Ecclesiastical Commissioners) hold, as registered owners, with the on-licences; and, what is the annual income which they derive from such property?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): The number of licensed houses mentioned in the Return as held under the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as owners would appear to be approximately correct. The Commissioners have for some years past aimed at reducing the number of public houses found existing upon the estates which have from time to time fallen into their possession—*e.g.*, on the Finsbury estate the number discontinued within the past 10 years, or under notice to be discontinued, is 16, exclusive of beerhouses, which the Commissioners invariably suppress as the leases fall in. I am not able to state the whole number of licensed houses in the country of which the Ecclesiastical Commissioners are registered owners, but nearly the whole of the income derived by the Commissioners from public houses arises in and about London, and the rental of such houses is about £10,000 per annum, out of a rental from house property in London and the suburbs of £224,000 per annum.

THE BISHOP OF LINCOLN'S CASE.

Colonel SANDYS (Lancashire, S.W., Bootle): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government are aware that an appeal from the recent decision of the Archbishop of Canterbury on serious issues affecting the Church of England is now pending before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council; and whether, in view of the extreme importance of the results of this appeal decision, Her Majesty's Government will consent to give an assurance that no person shall be appointed to sit as Judge for the hearing of this appeal who was not already a Privy Councillor before the commencement of the suit?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Her Majesty's Government have nothing whatever to do with the selection of the members of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council who are to try any particular appeal.

QUALIFICATION OF JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE (Devon, Ashburton): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the dissatisfaction which exists in certain quarters with reference to the present method of appointment, and the required property qualification of Justices of the Peace, he will consent to the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the causes of this dissatisfaction, to which the Bills dealing with these subjects, now before Parliament, may be referred?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The question of abolishing the property qualification required by law for Justices of the Peace has recently been discussed in the House of Lords, and a Bill for such abolition was rejected on its Second Reading. Under these circumstances, the hon. Member will understand that I cannot give such consent as he wishes. I am not aware of the existence of dissatisfaction such as the question suggests.

THE LABOUR COMMISSION.

Mr. DAVID THOMAS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if, in view of the fact that South Wales has during the past few months been the scene of several severe struggles between employers and employed, and that all efforts to form Conciliation Boards at Cardiff have proved futile, he will impress upon Her Majesty's Government the desirability of having both Parties in the district duly represented upon the proposed Royal Commission on Labour?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I can only repeat that this and every suggestion as to the constitution of the Royal Commission on Labour will be carefully considered by Her Majesty's Government.

IRISH CATTLE TRADE.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he has received a communication from the Irish Cattle Traders' and Stockbrokers' Association, directing his attention to the injury inflicted on Irish cattle dealers, farmers, and stock raisers, in consequence of the recent restrictions in the scheduled districts of Lancashire; whether these restrictions are imposed because of local disease in Lancashire; whether there is pleuro-pneumonia or other infectious disease amongst Irish cattle; whether all Irish cattle undergo veterinary inspection before shipment; and whether, having regard to the fact that these restrictions give an advantage to American competitors, they will be modified to the extent of allowing the free movement of Irish fat cattle?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Chaplin, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): Yes, Sir; the facts are as stated in the first four paragraphs of the hon. Member's question. With regard to the fifth, Irish cattle when they land in England, are subject to neither more or less restrictions than English cattle. I am afraid I cannot make any exceptions in their favour, and I do not understand in what respect it is that the restrictions give an advantage to their American competitors.

In reply to a further question by Dr. Tanner,

Mr. CHAPLIN said: I believe that fat cattle when landed are obliged to be slaughtered independent of whether they are landed in a scheduled district or not.

ACHILL SOUND BRIDGE.

Mr. DEASY (Mayo, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that Mr. Sweeny, contractor for the erection of the Achill Sound Bridge, was obliged to go outside the County Surveyor's specification owing to the nature of the foundations of the bridge; whether he is aware that, in consideration of the extra work executed by Mr. Sweeny, the Grand Jury of Mayo, who with the Board of Works defrayed the cost of construction, made a grant of £150 to Mr. Sweeny, and passed a resolution recommending that his claim on the Board of Works in respect of their proportion of the total sum expended in carrying out the extra work should be favourably considered; and whether the Board of Works intend to make good the loss incurred by Mr. Sweeny?

The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): On the recommendation of the Fishery Commissioners, a grant of £1,500 was made for the building of Achill Viaduct, and it was made conditional that the work should receive the approval of the County Surveyor. I can hold out no hope of the Board of Works making good any loss incurred by the contractor.

In reply to Dr. Tanner,

Mr. JACKSON said: The Board of Works have no power to make any further contribution.

IRISH DISTRESS.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the condition of a vast proportion of the population of the Gweedore district of Dunfanaghy Union; whether any part of Ireland can show a worse condition than is to be found in the Meenacladdy, Bloodyforeland, and Brinlack portions of this district; what measures he proposes for the relief of this misery; whether his attention has been called to the consequences that must result next year owing to the fact that no seed potatoes have been provided for the Gweedore district, and whether he purposes making provision to prevent the famine that must ensue next year if seed be not promptly provided now; and whether it is by any fault of the Poor Law Guardians of the district that no seed has been provided; and, if so, whether he can compel this Board of Guardians to perform their duty in this crisis, or whether he will take steps to save the people from the consequences of their neglect?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I am afraid that I cannot answer the question without further notice. I must, therefore, ask the hon. Member to defer it until I can make inquiry.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION IN IRELAND.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any grants were made towards technical instruction in Ireland during the year 1890 under the Technical Instruction Act of 1889; if so, for what particular branches of such instruction these grants were made, and what was the total amount in each branch; whether any steps have been taken to bring the facilities thus offered under the notice of those in Ireland for whom they were intended; if so, of what nature; if no such steps have been taken whether he will see what can be done in this direction; what was the total amount of grants for handicrafts or manual instruction in national schools in Ireland during the year 1890; and how many schools shared in these grants?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not aware that any grants have been made by Local Authorities in Ireland under the Technical Instruction Act of 1889. The City Council of Belfast have, however, added £300 to the rates for 1891, to be devoted to such schools as come within the scope of the Act. The facilities offered under the Act were duly brought to the notice of the Local Authorities by the Local Government Board for Ireland, who issued, in November, 1889, a circular to each such authority, inclosing a copy of the Act. As regards grants for handicrafts or manual instruction in national schools in Ireland, the figures for 1890 are not yet available; but for the year 1889 the total amount of the grants for such purposes was £28,296, and the number of schools which shared in these grants was something above 5,000.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

Railway Rates and Charges Provisional Order Bills—That they concur with the Commons in their Resolution—

> "That all Bills of the present Session to confirm Provisional Orders made by the Board of Trade under 'The Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888,' containing the classification of merchandise traffic, and the Schedule of maximum rates and charges applicable thereto, be referred to a Joint Committee of Lords and Commons,"

as desired by the Commons.

MOTIONS.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE (QUALIFICATION) BILL.

On Motion of Sir Joseph Pease, Bill to abolish the property qualification required by persons acting as Justices of the Peace, ordered to be brought in by Sir Joseph Pease, Sir Henry James, Sir William Harcourt, Mr. Herbert Gardner, and Mr. Burt.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 242.]

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

*(4.15.) MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central) rose to call attention to the condition of Friendly Societies in the United Kingdom, and to move—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the encouragement of more general voluntary provision for sickness and old age should engage the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and that the sound principles of provident insurance should be included in the subjects prescribed by the Education Code for instruction in elementary schools."

The hon .Member said: In bringing this matter under the consideration of the House, I must make an especial appeal to the patience and indulgence of hon. Members, and this on more grounds than one. In the first place, the subject is enormously complicated—far more so than I had any idea of when I first applied myself to its study. At every stage of inquiry one is met by a fresh condition of facts unknown before. In the second place, the Mover of a Resolution such as this runs enormous risks of having his motives wholly misconstrued. Now, while I have received many encouraging letters of approval and appreciation at the raising of the question there have not been wanting signs of fear on the part of some of the great Affiliated Orders that I have some sinister design of forcing either State control upon them, or compusory insurance upon the nation. Now I desire, Mr. Speaker, to say, once for all, and with the utmost emphasis, that a member myself of nearly every one of the great Orders of Friendly Societies, I am a very sincere admirer of the priceless national work they have done, and are doing, and can find no adequate words wherewith to express my unqualified respect for the hundreds of hard-working men who sacrifice their leisure for the good of their fellows, and by their precept and exemplary example, whether as Trustees, Grand Masters, District Officers, or Lodge Secretaries, are invaluable pillars in the State. Without further preface, then, Mr. Speaker, let me invite the House to review the present position of Friendly Societies. Beyond all question, if this task could have been undertaken by the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigtonshire (Sir Herbert Maxwell) who almost continuously, from 1885 to 1889, presided over Select Committees of Inquiry into National Insurance and the composition of Friendly Societies, it would have been very advantageous. I hope, however, that the House may have the advantage of his free participation in this Debate, rather as an individual than as a Member of the Government. Let me, in the first place, remind the House what is a Friendly Society. It is defined in the last issue of the Year Book of the Friendly Societies' Registry Office as—

> "A body established to provide for its purposes by the voluntary contributions of its members, with or without the aid of donations."

A most instructive article in *Blackwood's Magazine* for March, 1890, entitled "Improvident Thrift," published anonymously, but written, he authorises me to say, by the hon. Baronet the Member for Wigtonshire, gives a most interesting picture of the different classes of Friendly Societies. There are three classes differing, as he says, widely in aim, constitution, and merit. We have, in the first place, the real Friendly Societies promoted and conducted at small cost by office-holders elected by the members for their mutual aid in (a) the relief of members in sickness, (b) the payment of a sum of money on death, generally for funeral expenses. These genuine Friendly Societies number nearly 12,000 in the United Kingdom, for each separate lodge or Benefit Club is a separate Friendly Society with an independent *status*. The second class comprise what are known as Collecting Societies. They number only about 50, and their benefits are practically limited to life insurance. They are managed at heavy cost—seldom less than 40 per cent. of the premium income, and by largely salaried managers, for the benefit of the proprietors, uncontrolled in effect by the members. In the same category is the third class or Industrial Assurance Companies, nine or so only in number, I think, but with an enormous membership. All these three classes of Friendly Societies are admitted to registration, and the registry established in London under the Friendly Societies' Act, 1875—as well as Working Men's Clubs—including even Brass Band Clubs, besides Benevolent Societies and others. But no society, let the House note, is under any compulsion to register, and the Registry has no knowledge whatever of legions of mushroom societies, which, under the most fanciful names, spring constantly into existence, to ensnare the hard-earned savings of industry, and disappear in the very moment of need. Nor has it any knowledge of those societies which, once registered, make default in their Returns, are first suspended, then re-suspended, and finally removed from the Registry—a number ranging, I understand, from 150 to 200 societies a year. But even in respect to those societies which are registered, the Chief Registrar, to whom and to whose officials, and particularly to Mr. Sutton, the Actuary, I am indebted for much valuable information, is careful to say—

> "It cannot be too strongly insisted on that the Registrar cannot ensure the good management of Friendly Societies, and that the mere fact of registry affords no guarantee that a society is solvent or even honest."

The fact, then, is clear that, under the present condition of things, the thrifty among the industrial classes have no solid guarantee whatever that the benefits they hope to derive from their savings will ever be realised. It is true that in the great Affiliated Orders—in the Oddfellows, the Foresters, the Shepherds, and the Druids—there is comparatively little risk, although each lodge is a separate society. But in every town, and almost every village, there are sad instances of the exploiting of the honest and thrifty poor, either by unscrupulous adventurers or incompetent friends. Each instance is sufficiently melancholy in itself, but unfortunately it acts as an eloquent encouragement to that want of thrift, which shares with drink the responsibility of a vast mass of the poverty around us. By a Return moved for in 1881, by my hon. Friend opposite, the Member for the South-Western Division of Devonshire (Lord Lymington) it appeared that in 576 English unions, out of a total of 647, there were among the male indoor paupers former members of Benefit Societies to the total number of 11,304, or about an eighth of the total number of indoor male paupers in that year. Of the 11,304 former members of Benefit Societies 7,391 had either been unable to keep up their contributions or had been dismissed, but 3,913 had been deprived of the benefits they had counted upon by the breaking up of their societies, and 555 had been—poor fellows—members for 30 years and upwards, 612 for over 20 years and less than 30 years, and 1,026 for over 10 years and less than 20 years. As the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently said:—

> "There is no subject which excites greater sympathy than the case of agricultural labourers or other wage earners who make contributions towards a fund for providing for their sickness and old age, and then find their hopes disappointed."

Under these circumstances it cannot be otherwise than gratifying to the House to think that at the end of 1885 there were upwards of 3,500,000 of members in Friendly Societies in the United Kingdom, with total funds estimated at £19,250,000. The Chief Registrar in giving me those figures stated, however, that they could not be accurately relied upon, and I am informed upon most reliable authority that fully one-fourth must be deducted for multiple membership. Indeed, instances are common of membership of four or five societies. The collecting societies boast a membership also of 3,600,000 with £2,000,000 of funds. The last quinquennial Returns moved for by my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) will doubtless show a great advance on this total alleged membership of 7,000,000. But it may be interesting for a moment to consider what proportion the thrifty bear to the industrial population. We have, unfortunately, only the Census of 1881 to guide us. But the House will, I venture to think, agree that the 317,000 men and the 1,900,000 women engaged in domestic service, the 2,435,000 men and the 215,000 women engaged in agriculture, the 5,899,000 men and the 2,000,000 women engaged in industries should be induced, as far as possible, to insure against sickness and old age. These make a total of 12¾ millions of people, and if we add at least 3,000,000 people returned in other classes, but who are wage-earners, who ought also to be insured, we shall have a total of about 16,000,000, of whom 10,000,000 are men. The House will thus see, although there are many insured, how many there are who in sickness and old age have no other resource but the humiliating one of the workhouse and the poor rate. The position, then, of Friendly Societies at the present time would appear to be satisfactory in many respects, but capable of vast improvement. Much may, I believe, be done to strengthen their position, independently of a suggestion I shall presently make, by less acute local competition among lodges, and by a greater concentration of heads and finances. Women, too, should be admitted to membership, considerable earners as they often are both in domestic service and in industry. It is probable, also, that a reduction in the number of convivial gatherings would lead to lessened expenses and the acquisition of greater financial strength, and would enable the large Orders to have halls of their own in the great towns, and, if they wished, professional secretaries. In the meantime, much might be done by the carrying out of the recommendations of the Select Committee of 1888, appointed to inquire into the operation of the Friendly Societies Act, 1875, and to suggest what amendment of the law was required to insure the better management of such societies and companies, and the more complete protection of the interests of its members. The Committee reported in August, 1889, and made no fewer than 33 definite recommendations, all of which appear to have been comfortably shelved.

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir H. MAXWELL, Wigton): Perhaps I may be allowed to say that of those 33 recommendations some have been already carried into effect in the re-organisation of the Registry Office.

*MR. HOWARD VINCENT: I am glad to learn that the Friendly Societies Registry has been re-organised. I was aware of that, but I think the House will agree with me that a large number of the recommendations remain to be considered and acted upon by Her Majesty's Government. The most important of all is the suggestion that all collecting societies shall be registered. I will go even further and say that every Society obtaining money from the humbler classes for alleged future benefits should be compelled not only to register, but also to submit its accounts and assets to public audit. If this had been so, many honest men, I know, would not be in the impoverished state in which they now are. Indeed, this view was taken by the Select Committee on National Provident Insurance against Pauperism, which was appointed in May, 1885, and re-appointed in 1886 and 1887, when it reported. Here is what I said :—

> "The present system of registration of Friendly Societies cannot be considered satisfactory. If greater powers were given to the Registrar in connection with the registration of Societies rules, and with a view to the securing of an efficient audit, the proper investment of funds, and the protection of benefit funds from any inroads upon them for management expenses, it is believed that registration would be of far greater value to the members of these Societies."

In this view I must express full concurrence. I would make the registration obligatory, effective, and of real value to the insured, and the registry not a mere recording office in a back street, but an accessible place where any member of a Friendly, Collecting, or Benefit Society could obtain full information concerning his society, its present position, and probable stability. I am sensible that I must not occupy too much of the time of the House on this question, and that I am making a very large draft indeed on the indulgence and patience of hon. Members, but I should like to speak—as shortly as the importance of the subject admits of—upon the second branch of the Resolution I have put on the Paper, that is to say, the old age or superannuation question. I know this subject amongst the masses of the people has often been the subject of Debate, and I know that it has often been the subject of Parliamentary inquiry. Not to go even further back than 1882, I find the much-lamented Mr. Fawcett presiding over a Select Committee—

> "To inquire into the operation of the Act which authorizes the Post Office to grant annuities and issue policies of life assurance."

The Report said—

> "The Committee attribute special importance to encouraging in every possible way the habit of making some provision for old age," &c.

Mr. Howard Vincent

As a consequence, greatly increased facilities were afforded to the public—due to the exertions of Mr. Fawcett himself, who, I believe, was then Postmaster General. I should like to ask how have the public availed themselves of these facilities? Whether or not the long Latin phrase "deferred annuity" "frightened the public," as one important witness averred, it is certain that "the old-age pension" obtainable through the Post Office is little called for. As a letter I have received from a high and most competent authority says :—

> "Any amount of efforts have been made to puff—nay, to bring before the public—the real and incontestable advantages offered by the Post Office at lower rates than speculative companies, but the seed has fallen upon stony ground. The Postmaster General has 10,000 offices open at which he conducts annuity and insurance business. He pays his officers for every contract they secure.' He distributes leaflets from house to house. He fills savings bank books with advertisements, and has invented attractive placards, but the results are not encouraging. Arrangements have been made under which, through the agency of provident and friendly societies, the payment in advance of the first year's premium, which is usually required, is dispensed with. Moreover, the members of friendly societies are allowed to pay their premiums in weekly, monthly, or quarterly instalments from the commencement, receiving at once their contracts, which take effect from the date of issue."

Now, I venture to think the Post Office has done, the House will admit, all or very nearly all that it can, and this is no doubt largely owing to the great interest in the question taken by Mr. Algernon Turnor, the Financial Secretary. But we find this amazing fact, that during the last five years the 38,000,000 of people in the United Kingdom only purchased 562 deferred annuities of the total value of £11,500, or, say, 1 deferred annuity a year among 240,000 people, while in the same period only 2,810 insurances have been effected. It cannot much be wondered at that a case was made out in 1885 for the appointment of a Select Committee on "National Provident Insurance against Pauperism." Although the reference to the Committee was wide, the inquiry was really confined to Canon Blackley's scheme for the compulsory insurance of all persons of both sexes and of every class by the prepayment, between the ages of 18–21, of £10 or thereabouts into a national Friendly or Provident Society, which would pay 8s. per week sick pay and 4s. per week superannuation pay after 70 years of age. As the Report ran—

> "The admirable motives, labours, and results which form the history of the higher order of Friendly Societies caused the Committee to treat with great respect the strong objections brought against the scheme by the affiliated orders."

and in the result the Committee did not recommend the adoption of the scheme. But I feel sure the House will still join in recognising—

> "The disinterested patience and energy with which Canon Blackley laboured to remove the causes which tended to drive the poor into the workhouses."

I have mentioned the callous indifference of the people to avail themselves of the Post Office old-age pay. But I find that there is even less partiality for the annuities of the industrial assurance companies—four having ceased working in 1889—which returned to the Board of Trade their out-goings in annuities in 1889 at only £56, although it is only right to add that two of these industrial companies did general business with 91 other companies, and these paid altogether three-quarters of a million in annuities. The provident societies alone returned £28,000 under the general head, but no single annuity in the industrial branch. A similar state of things exists in regard to that great society whose annual report has been published during the past few days—the Prudential. Last year that society issued about 100,000 policies of under £100 each for the payment of a certain sum of money to persons attaining the age of 60 or some other definite age. I am informed by the officers of the society that there is no inclination whatever among the industrial classes to avail themselves of the system of deferred annuities. When the House realises this state of affairs, coupled with the failure of the great majority of the industrial classes to join a substantial Friendly Society, there can be little surprise that in 1889 there were 992,338 persons upon the poor rate in the United Kingdom at an average total cost of over £10 a year a head, or £10,202,000 sterling spent in actual relief of the poor out of public funds, which were certainly supplemented by at least an equal, and probably a much larger, amount raised by private philanthropy. The old-age matter is the most difficult one of all to impress upon the public mind. The great desire is for funeral parade and "the panoply of woe," in the checking of which the well-to-do should set a general example of simplicity as the Duke of Westminster and so many are doing. The common answer of persons is that they will not live to 60. They forget that on the showing of Sir Spencer Wells, medical and sanitary sciences have in the past 30 years saved 1,146 lives annually to each million, or 30,000 lives a year to England and Wales. It is thus found that out of a million males born 365,000 live beyond 60 years of age and then have an expectation of life of 13 years; while out of a million women 422,800 live beyond 60 for an average period of 14¼ years. According to the census of 1881 there would appear to be out of the 25,000,000 persons in England and Wales 1,916,265 over 60 years of age. Of those, according to the instructive and melancholy returns just issued at the instance of the hon. Member for Morpeth (Mr. Burt), there are, excluding all lunatics, vagrants, and persons in receipt of relief constructively by reason of relief being given to wives or children, 286,867 old people—the crippled and superannuated veterans of industry—upon the poor rates, of whom 68,124 are in the workhouse. That, I say, is the position so pathetically described by one of the humbler witnesses before the recent Committee. He was an aged cabdriver, said the Member for Wigtownshire in his Report, and his experience of the workhouse had been frequent and painful, and, as the old man put it, "whenever he came out in the morning he had the workhouse before him." Now, I have endeavoured, and I hope I have succeeded, however imperfectly, in showing the House four notable facts:—First, that although there are many admirable Friendly Societies, and not least of all the Mid Gloucester Working Men's Conservative Association Benefit Society, promoted and managed by my hon. Friend the Member for the Stroud Division, they are, for some reason or other, insufficiently supported; secondly, that the funds of the Friendly Societies do not allow of their giving any pension benefits in old age; thirdly, that the old-age pay offered by the Post Office is insufficiently utilized; and, fourthly, that an excessive proportion of old men and women who are past work—and the cry is more and more for young blood—are driven for their maintenance to the parish and to charity. In this there is nothing dishonourable; but, with a keen sense of shame which does them credit, they dread the workhouse beyond anything, and believe that it reflects on their descendants. If the House will bear with me a few moments longer I will speak of the possible remedy. I have mentioned Canon Blackley's well-intentioned scheme. It was thoroughly examined by a Select Committee and dismissed. I do not intend, therefore, to revive it, even if I were willing to do so, which I am not. There is the new German law of insurance against old age and infirmity. It is very complex, but has been admirably summarised for Parliament by Mr. Esme Howard, of Her Majesty's Diplomatic Service. In a sentence, Mr Howard describes it as "a great structure of socio-political legislation for purposes of national insurance, and as containing the most important and extensive scheme of insurance ever yet devised by any Government." The object of the German law is to secure to every working man or servant, male or female, throughout the Empire, a sufficient yearly income to release him or her from the necessity of being entirely dependent upon others—firstly, in case of confirmed infirmity; and, secondly, on reaching the 70th year—by insurances effected with the Government by three parties in equal portions—the beneficiary, his or her employer, and the State jointly. I dismiss this scheme, too, as impracticable in the United Kingdom, chiefly for the reason of its compulsory character. I believe it would be quite impossible to force a compulsory scheme of insurance on the people of this country. We can lead the British people to do anything reasonable, but cannot drive them. What, then, hon. Members may ask, do I venture to suggest for the consideration of the House? It may well be said that it is not worth while to lay bare the very patent national sore of poverty well known to every one, caused either by thriftlessness or by improvident thrift, if I have no remedy to submit for consideration. I am not in this difficulty, however, but I place any suggestion before the House with hesitation, because I know full well that attention will probably be directed less to the evil than to the detail of the suggested means of counteracting it. But I am quite willing to adopt anything whatever in its place that may seem better calculated to meet the end in view, or likely to prove more acceptable. The aim is to induce the industrial and domestic classes, male and female, to insure for sickness and for old age and to take care that their savings shall be fully protected, not only against fraud, but also against incompetence. I would work, then, through the already-established and admirable Friendly Societies, and give the members such increased protection as experience may show them to need, while avoiding interference with the absolute independence and spirit of self-help which is the life of the Friendly Society movement. I would help them with funds to make their financial position absolutely secure and unimpeachable; I would prevent the ignorant, helpless, and unwary falling a prey to the unscrupulous sharks of society, and would meet, encourage, and assist the efforts of Friendly and Benefit Societies which prove themselves to be well managed, economical, and conducted on lines of sound finance. This, I think, may be done without much difficulty, not by the German grant of one-third the contributions, which may be perhaps too much, but by a capitation contribution of, say, 5s. or 10s. per head per annum, to be invested for the superannuation of the members. I am by no means alone in this suggestion, although I may be the first to suggest it in the House of Commons, and it may strike some hon. Members as abruptly novel. Shortly before I came into the House I received a letter from a gentleman well-known for his wide views on social questions—Mr. Wyndham Portal. His views run parallel with my own and he justifies such a grant upon two grounds —(1) because friendly societies maintain a portion of their members in permanent sickness who would otherwise have to be maintained by the community, and (2) because it would encourage thrift among those who urgently need encouragement. I say a system such as that I am advocating would not be a twentieth part as costly as the £10 per head the 1,000,000 paupers now cost; and it would improve the national character by raising its head high above the level of hopeless poverty and workhouse degradation. By such means I venture to think that greater confidence in the utility of provision for sickness and old age would arise in the mass of the people. One thing more I would suggest, and that is that every boy and girl should have thoroughly instilled into them, as a part of compulsory education, the principles of sound insurance. The Committee of 1887, indeed, declared—

> "That it is highly desirable that the Legislature, which had made education compulsory, should cause instruction in sound principles of thrift and insurance to form part of that education."

As yet I do not think that my right hon. Friend the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education has done anything in this direction. But I trust he will not longer delay. In conclusion, I should like to submit that the encouragement of more general voluntary provision for sickness and old age among the masses of the people urgently demands the consideration of the Government. It can be given by the means I suggest. It can be given by the extension, in every practicable way, of the privileges now enjoyed by Friendly Societies as to the profitable investment of their funds, their exemption from income-tax, by extending to them every facility for obtaining sound financial advice and assistance, by, perhaps, relieving their arrear calls from postage, as suggested by my noble Friend the Member for South Bucks. Such support to the grand Friendly Society organisation of the United Kingdom would, I think, be a worthy national work and productive of infinite benefit, not alone to the present, but to many a succeeding generation. Now, Mr. Speaker it only remains for me to thank the House for the kindness and courtesy with which it has listened to me. I can only hope that one effect of this Debate will be to direct attention to the most urgent need of encouraging thrift and of making provision for sickness and old age among the masses of the people, and that it will be admitted, that in dilating upon this I have not been unnecessarily occupying the time of the House. I beg to propose the Resolution which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the encouragement of more general voluntary provision for sickness and old age should engage the attention of Her Majesty's Government, and that the sound principles of provident insurance should be included in the subjects prescribed by the Education Code for instruction in elementary schools."—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

*(5.11.) SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I rise to second the Motion, and I desire to express the satisfaction with which I have listened to the able and comprehensive review by my hon. and gallant Friend, of an intricate and interesting subject — the questions connected with Friendly Societies. Speaking generally, I am disposed to agree with the conclusions at which my hon. Friend has arrived. I will content myself with a few words in support of the principle contained in the Motion which stands in my name on the Paper, and which is as follows—

> "That, with the view of inducing Friendly and Provident Societies to place themselves in a position of financial security, some contribution might reasonably be afforded by the State to such societies as are able, after actuarial valuation, to obtain a certificate from a public auditor that their resources are adequate to secure to all their members the whole of the benefits offered by their existing regulations."

I think that something may be done in simplification of the existing law, and making things still more plain to the working classes, because if ever there is a case in which the law ought to be popularised it surely is in connection with the subject of thrift in all its branches. There is room, too, for improvement in the manner in which the annual information is furnished to this House, for it requires an expert to find his way over the details as presented in the Blue Books. I base my Motion on the great advantages that would directly flow if societies which are now unsound were stimulated to become sound; and another view which I have in my mind is to encourage the habit of making some provision for old age. I think the State may reasonably be invited to contribute to societies which are now in a sound financial state. We may differ here on political questions, but this is a matter about which we may all be agreed. Several Committees of this House have in their Reports pointed to the great advantages to be derived from the encouragement of thrift. The Committee of 1882 drew distinct attention to the necessity of dealing with this question, and of "encouraging in every possible way the habit of making some provision for old age." I think we shall all agree that the social condition of our working classes is a matter of State concern. Few questions are more intimately connected with the welfare of our working classes. It is nothing short of a disgrace to England, which is the richest country in the world, that so many of its citizens should end their days in a workhouse. Many of these poor people, however, do not find their way there through any misconduct or lack of thrift, or drunkenness or recklessness, but owing to their having trusted to the broken reed of rotten Friendly Societies. To that class of people we ought to extend our sympathy, and the House should do all it possibly can to obviate such direful calamities as these. This question of Friendly Societies ought to be dealt with, and the House ought to summon up courage to deal with this whole problem of thrift. Personally, this is to me no new question, as I have for some years past been much impressed with the necessity of something being done. It has been my fortune to enter upon this question at meetings of Friendly Societies; and the proposals I have made have invariably met with considerable approval. Perhaps, it is too much to expect that the approval of the House will be given to the suggestions the first time the subject is discussed here; and I am quite prepared to admit that it is for me to prove my case. I am aware that the principle laid down by my hon. Friend is in direct opposition to the present guiding principle, that in this matter the societies must bear their own burdens, and ought not to ask for State aid at all. I should modify this by adding until all other remedies have been exhausted. The question is, whether there is a sufficiently strong expediency to justify the House for taking the course they are asked to do. It is not enough to say that the people have the remedy in their own hands; for a case in point is the interference of the State in educational matters, and making education compulsory, whether the parents wished it or not. The scheme we suggest, however, is not a compulsory one. The present proposal is essentially different from the German law on the subject; for under the German scheme it is compulsory, whereas there is no compulsion in the present proposal. It may be said that this proposition is socialistic, and that, if the door is once opened, there is no knowing where the Government will be allowed to stop. But Socialism is already among us in its most unadulterated form in the Poor Law. That law is not an encouragement to thrift; it is rather a discouragement; and if we wish to foster the spirit of thrift, I think the State will have to make some pecuniary sacrifice. It would enable numbers of the working classes to avoid the most hateful necessities, that of ultimately drifting to the poor house. But we may be asked—"Why do you single out the Friendly Societies? Why, out of the various methods of thrift, do you single out one?" I think there is an answer to that. No doubt every form of society for the promotion of thrift which is based on sound principles is worthy of support and encouragement. But there is strong reason for a special effort on behalf of Friendly Societies. Any man who is a member of a Friendly Society has already given substantial guarantee that he is a person of thrifty habits, and to help him would be helping a man who is helping himself. The result of this State subsidy would be to encourage Friendly Societies to become financially sound. A further result would be to afford a strong inducement to working men to become members of Friendly Societies that they were assured were financially sound. They would no longer have fear of those breaks-down which have been so frequent. The fact that the State gave contributions for old age and annuities would be guarantee of the soundness of the society because it would be concluded that they would not be forthcoming from the State were the society other than sound. By adopting this course it seems to me that you remove an obstacle to a great number of the working classes becoming members of these societies, for naturally they now hold back when they hear all around of financial shipwreck and disaster among them. The effect on sound societies would be that it would enable them to do what they are nearly all willing to do, namely, provide old age benefits. Questionable or weaker societies would be fully aware of this, and they would be encouraged and stimulated to specia efforts in order to reach a position of financial soundness. As to the societies which are financially unsound, the effect of my suggestion, if adopted, would be to hasten their decay; and I think it would be a blessing were these dangerous and false beacons, which have lured many an honest and saving man to his destruction, swept away. It is the fact that the legal right to the title "Registered Friendly Society" is often misleading; this registry enables unsound societies to act as false beacons. Let me deal for a moment with another class of objectors—the *laissez faire*, "why cannot you let it alone." They found themselves largely on the words of John Stuart Mill:

> "*Laissez faire*, in short, should be the general principle. Every departure from it, unless required by some great good, is a certain evil."

I entirely agree with him. This would be a certain evil unless it were to be followed by a certain great good. Is it not a great good to stimulate your Friendly Societies in that way? Is it not a great good to encourage this thrift? Is it not a great good to avert these horrible shipwrecks and failures which have unfortunately proved only too frequent? The question seems hardly to require argument, and I contend that the condition of "great good," laid down by John Stuart Mill, is more than satisfied, and if it is, I think *laissez faire* has no right to remain an obstacle in dealing with this important matter. Another reason is this: the State has already shown by legislation from time to time that it does regard this matter with great attention and anxiety. The position of the Post Office Savings' Bank annuities is proof of this. My hon. Friend has shown the miserable success which has attended the purchase of annuities from the Post Office—the total number of these payable after the age of 60 being 568 since the establishment of the Savings' Bank Department. Obviously the system has broken down, though from no fault of the Post Office. From the annual Reports of the Postmaster General it will be seen that a series of experiments have been made, and everything possible has been done to facilitate this work, and, so far as lies in the power of the Post Office Authorities, every inducement that the law allows them to put forth has been held out to make this legislation effective. The reason of the failure is, however, not far to seek. The first cause of failure is the absence of personal solicitation or canvassing, which could not be adopted by the Post Office officials. Other societies pay their agents a direct commission for members obtained through personal solicitation. Again, the ordinary poor person is not prepared to look to the remote contingency of his being sixty years of age, when he would enjoy a life annuity. He is more likely to be touched by the more probable contingency of sickness. The consequence is that the first society he joins is one giving sick pay. It is impossible that, under any circumstances, the State could undertake to give sick pay. It is obvious, therefore, that people who prefer to stick to one society and who first join a society giving sick pay would not think of going to the Post Office. Again, there may possibly be something in the preference which people have for societies which exist at their doors. These societies have a local name, the people are familiar with the *personnel* of the staff, members of which are probably among their personal friends. They are not so interested in the Post Office, which they have a general idea is managed by gentlemen in London, and their general preference is for a local society rather than one which is not so strictly local. The great question is how can we facilitate this branch of Post Office Savings' Bank work as old age pay? The suggestion of a practical character which I make, I hope will meet with the approval of Her Majesty's Government. I find, in looking at the instructions to the Post Office officials, a circular dated 1884, stating that officials and postmasters would be allowed commission for all proposals of insurances and annuities submitted by them, the contracts connected with which were taken up, the warrants for the commission to be forwarded immediately the contracts were entered into. The rates of commission were sums varying from 1s. to 4s. in respect of sums exceeding £10 up to £100. There the principle was established of rewarding by commission officers of the Post Office who are successful in obtaining contracts for insurance. On inquiry I find that is no source of expense to the State. What I want to direct the attention of the Government to is this: Why should not some such arrangement be made for payment of commissions to others than the Post Office officials? Why should not the Treasury pay the sound Friendly Societies, by way of commission, for each contract or policy of Post Office insurance or annuity obtained by them for any member of their societies? Why should not this payment be made? It is one of the mildest and most modest of recommendations, and possesses this advantage: that it would require no expenditure of State funds. I believe it would require nothing more than a simple stroke of the pen on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It would not even require legislation; a Treasury Minute would do it at once, giving the necessary authority to pay commission. In this way, without any cost to the State, the Government might do a good deal, and, in so doing, they might enlist the active sympathy of the managers of the Friendly Societies. For my part, I have arrived at the conclusion that we shall never get what we want in the shape of an extended application of provident habits unless, and until, we can induce the great Provident Societies to work with the State in endeavouring to bring about such a result. If the managers of these societies could only be made to see that it would be to the advantage of those institutions to concur in such an arrangement, a great and beneficial movement might be the consequence. May I here remind the Chancellor of the Exchequer of the mystic value of a certain five shillings per cent. with which he was able to grease the wheels and afford successful help to one of the greatest financial undertakings of the age, in connection with his great Conversion Scheme? Here, however, is a plan, which in its simple inception, does not require even that mystic five shillings per cent. But I am bound to say that, although I would seriously urge on the Chancellor of the Exchequer that this proposal might be made effective at once, and without difficulty, the payment of the commission should, of course, be confined to societies that are financially sound. Beyond this, I would say that, if it were necessary in order thoroughly to enlist the managers of the great Provident Societies in the prosecution of this plan, and to get them to avail themselves of the simple machinery of the Post Office, which is now comparatively idle, I would not stop a commission which, as I have said, would cost nothing, but would even be prepared to increase that commission if necessary. I must apologise for having ventured to address the House at such great length; but my excuse is that I feel very deeply on this question. I feel that it is one on which the time has come when everything points to the need for action, and that too much time has been allowed to slip away without doing anything. I do not think that what I ask is unreasonable. I ask for no State monopoly or prohibition, for nothing that is not entirely voluntary. My proposition involves no restraint of liberty—no compulsory regulation or interference with the working of any existing society. The soundest societies would benefit considerably; those that are less sound, and that have small margins to make up, would be stimulated to more active exertion. The time is favourable, wages are good, and the doctrine of superannuation is spreading day by day. We see it in the compulsory superannuation of the whole of our police. There is a Committee now sitting upstairs for the purpose of investigating the payment of compulsory superannuation of some kind to the whole of our elementary teachers —a movement which is entirely in harmony with the spirit of the times. The Chancellor of the Exchequer may complain that the proposal is of an uncertain character, because no amount is specified. I admit that I am not prepared to specify any amount, but, as I have said, the demand on the Exchequer would at first be very small, and, if it were proved that we had arrived at a beneficial and satisfactory arrangement, there is no tax which I, for one, would more gladly contribute my quota to than one which would tend to effect what I so heartily desire, namely, the introduction of a sound and general system of provident assurance. I may add that the Friendly Societies would hardly be likely to place obstacles in the way of an arrangement which they themselves acknowledge to be the keystone of old age annuities, which is all that is wanting to complete the edifice on which they have so long been engaged. It seems to me that some such system is necessary, and that, therefore, it is reasonable. In conclusion, I desire to thank the House for having listened to me with so much attention, and I now most humbly and heartily commend my suggestion to its favourable consideration.

*(5.48.) MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): One of the remarkable features of this Debate, as far as it has yet gone, has been the unexpected development of strong socialistic tendencies on the part of the hon. Gentlemen who have moved and seconded this Motion. Perhaps none of us have ever been much surprised at the bold suggestions that have come from the hon. Gentleman the Member for Central Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent). That hon. Member has more than once favoured the House with very remarkable suggestions in connection with trade and commerce, and to-night we have hardly been astonished at the new development into which he has embarked in his proposal for subsidising the great Friendly Societies. But, Sir, when an even older Member of the House, and one equally honoured by us —a county Representative, a Chairman of Quarter Sessions, a gentleman to whom we have looked to lead and guide us in the sound principles appertaining to national affairs and constitutional questions—comes forward and at once throws himself at the feet of the highest order of Socialism, there seems to be something debasing in the process; and I think it will be equally surprising, not only to the hon. Gentleman's friends, but also to his constituents, when they have read his extraordinary declaration.

*SIR R. PAGET: They are well used to it.

*MR. BROADHURST: The hon. Member's constituents may be used to some surprises, but hardly, I should think, of the direction and character of that we have had to-night.

*SIR R. PAGET: I beg the hon. Member's pardon; my constituents are used to precisely the same suggestions as I have had the honour to make to-night.

*MR. BROADHURST: Very well, Sir; but if the hon. Gentleman's constituents are used to such things, we, in this House, have not been used to them. There was one other characteristic displayed in the speech of the hon. Member, to which I listened with equal surprise. The hon. Gentleman charged the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer with "nobbling." He charged the right hon. Gentleman with having nobbled the Financial Authorities by bribing them into the acceptance of his great financial scheme, and he recommended the right hon. Gentleman to try his hand in a similar line of business with regard to the management of the Friendly Societies. I should like to know whether the hon. Member for Central Sheffield has consulted those who are most concerned in the proposals he has made to-night, as to whether they look on those proposals with favour or whether they do not?

*MR. HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to say that I have consulted a great many of them.

*MR. BROADHURST: He says he has consulted a great many of them; but do they approve of State endowment?

*MR. HOWARD VINCENT: A great many of them do.

*MR. BROADHURST: The annual gathering of one of the greatest Orders of the Friendly Societies will shortly take place, advantage may then be taken of the opportunity to obtain the views and opinions of that Order upon this question. If I may venture to offer an opinion on the matter, I would say that the proposal which has to-night been submitted by the hon. Member for Central Sheffield will not be looked on with favour by the members of that body; but that on the contrary those proposals will be opposed very strongly, and in all probability by a very large majority. If you are going to endow these Friendly Societies with a regular subscription from the Government, it will follow that the Government must of necessity have agents and Representatives on the Boards of Management of those Societies, and not only that—because the Boards of Management are not the only persons who discuss financial matters—but the Government will also have to insist on having a Representative in every lodge and branch of each of the great Orders of Friendly Societies. I think the hon. Member was rather unfortunate in mentioning specific societies as being particularly sound. I do not object to the description of those he mentioned. On the contrary, I believe the great Orders of Oddfellows, Foresters, and Shepherds are in a good, sound state financially. But the only misfortune in mentioning those societies was that the hon. Member left out of account other societies equally great and equally sound, such as the Hearts of Oak and the Wesleyan General Assurance Society. Now, I do not and cannot support the hon. Member to-night in his extraordinary proposal until we have had the opinion of these great societies as to the policy suggested; because, in my opinion, they will not approve of it. With regard to the number of Post Office annuities, I understand that the hon. Member has mistaken the number, which is upwards of 1,000 instead of 500.

*MR. HOWARD VINCENT: I said 562 in the last five years.

*MR. BROADHURST: I am informed by my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle that the number of annuitants is 1,115. The subject of Post Office Insurance is very little known among working men. There is no systematic advertisement. No doubt, there are notices lying about on the counters of post offices; but no effort is made to make the system well known and to attract the attention of a large number of people. In 1881-2-3 I was in constant consultation with the late Mr. Fawcett, when that gentleman was giving his great mind to this subject; and one of the suggestions which I made to Mr. Fawcett was that there should be as short an abstract as possible made out, with just the main features of the scheme printed in large type, and that employers and proprietors of works should be invited to place these notices in the most prominent part of their works, so that every opportunity should be given to the people to thoroughly master the proposal. I believe that by those means we would secure a much greater number of insurances being taken out. I do think that the limitation of deposit in any one year should be raised beyond £30, and this would have been done on more than one occasion had it not been for the rather unwarranted and unworthy opposition of the banking interest on both sides of the House. Now, the hon. Member who seconded the Motion spoke with great warmth of the degradation of becoming a State pauper in old age. There is degradation, but I think that it attaches not to the people themselves, but to the nation which has received the labour of the man, and perhaps of his wife, for 50 or 60 years, in the creation of wealth and prosperity to the nation at a remuneration which makes it absolutely impossible for these people to provide against want in old age, whether by the Post Office system or by State-aided Friendly Societies. The lamentable side of pauperism is patent to all, but I maintain it is in no sense dishonouring to a man who has laboured on the land perhaps for 60 or 70 years for 10s. or 12s. or 14s. a week to resort to the workhouse in his declining years. I can conceive dishonour in receiving a State pension when no adequate service has been rendered to the nation in return for the pension. What we want to see is that the labourer should be given greater prospects of prosperity, better wages for sustenance in youth, and larger opportunities for provision in old age. I am glad to be a witness of the anxiety of the hon. Member for Sheffield and the hon. Member for Somerset to aid in that great work. But if we are going to endow Friendly Societies with a Treasury grant, why not endow Co-operative Societies, who are, above all others, people who help themselves? Now, since the hon. Members for Sheffield and Somerset have undertaken to champion the Socialist movement we ought to give them all the assistance in our power; but if this is a right thing to do, why not aid Trades Unions also? You cannot possibly stop at your village Friendly Societies and at your great Orders of Oddfellows and Foresters. You must go to the Trades Unions. I would like to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he thinks about these endowments; we shall be glad to hear what he has to say to the Motion of his two bold and daring followers, and to the speeches in which it has been moved and seconded, which have been wider and larger than the Motion itself. In so far as working men can be induced to take special care as to the direction in which they shall invest their small savings, such a desire to instruct will, of course, have the consent and approval of everybody. But the question is full of difficulty. Down to the class of working men who get 30s. or £2 a week, the great majority can advise themselves as to where and how they shall invest; but then we come down to the floating masses of our great cities and the agricultural labourers, and there it is not a question of where it is best to invest. That is not the difficulty; the question is where are they to obtain that which they ought to invest. If the hon. Members for Sheffield and Somerset will ask the House to devise means whereby the labouring classes can obtain money to invest, they would lead us far deeper, as some persons would say, into the slough of Socialism; or, as others would perhaps, say, far higher into the realms of desirable realisation. We are all desirous that the people should be taught thrift—the rich as well as the poor. None stand in greater need of elementary lessons in economy than the well-to-do, but the working classes are by force compelled to study domestic economy. The difficulties of superannuation are enormous. The wage-earner of 15s. a week is not less desirous to provide against want in old age than any other person, but the pressing necessities of the day make it impossible for him voluntarily to contract that out of his terribly restricted means he shall lay aside something against his attaining the age of 60 years—an age which comparatively few hard working men ever attain [*Cries of* "Oh!"], comparatively few. Take my own trade. The average life in that trade is 36 or 37 years. I have known men in the trade live to be 80, but they are talked of from the one end of the country to the other, as though no one had ever attained the age before. Our average age is 36 or 37. I am speaking from memory, but I believe that is correct. No doubt life is prolonged now by better sanitary appliances, as well as by other means which formerly did not exist. Every boat, railway, omnibus, and tramway, every means of cheap transit from place to place, is a life-saving appliance for the working classes. That, together with the education which is being so broadly scattered among the people, no doubt leads to a prolongation of life. For the reasons I have stated I cannot support the Motion, and much less can I support the views expressed in the speeches of the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Howard Vincent) and the hon. Member for Somerset (Sir R. Paget).

*(6.15·) SIR H. MAXWELL: I believe, Sir, that from all the many subjects which the enviable versatility of the hon. Member for Sheffield enables him to take into his consideration, he could not have selected one of greater interest or wider importance. We have only to consider the enormous numbers of persons whose interests are involved in the different societies and companies dealing with the savings of the working classes of this Country, to be convinced that in inviting the Legislature to interfere further with those societies my hon. Friend is asking us to do something which ought to be considered very carefully indeed before we take action. Keeping this proviso in view, I am bound to say I see very little in the terms of my hon. Friend's Motion to object to. In fact, had it not been for the proposals contained in the latter part of his speech, I think Her Majesty's Government would have found very little difficulty in assenting to the Resolution. But the speech of my hon. Friend went a great deal beyond the four corners of his Resolution, and I am afraid if we agree to the Resolution we should be regarded as endorsing some of the far-reaching proposals he has made. There were one or two things in the earlier part of my hon. Friend's speech to which I must refer. In the first place, he began with a somewhat equivocal invitation to myself that in my reply I should deal with his speech rather as an individual than as a Member of the Government. I am afraid I have not got the Janus-like qualities with which he credits me. It is impossible for me to stand here with two faces—one for peace towards my hon. Friend's Resolution, and another of war towards his proposals when they come before the Treasury. I think my hon. Friend has not given sufficient credit to the Legislature for what it has done and is doing in the interests of Friendly Societies. In what I am about to say I believe I shall express the mind of the Government on this subject. I must, before going further, congratulate my hon. Friend on having obtained such an insight into this question in what he described as a very limited time. A great many people discuss the question of insurance and the affairs of Friendly Societies with, I am afraid, a very superficial knowledge of the subject. My hon. Friend says that, in some respects, the Registry of Friendly Societies is not satisfactory. Possibly that is the case, as the Act constituting that registry was passed in 1875, and the 16

years which have elapsed since then have been sufficient to show certain imperfections in the office. From time to time it has been necessary to increase the staff in order to enable it to overtake the rapidly increasing and most complicated business with which it has to deal. On the whole, I think very few members or managers of Friendly Societies will be found to echo my hon. Friend's words when he says that "as a means of information to Friendly Societies and their officers, that office is almost worthless." The amount of information obtained by anyone visiting that office depends very much on the state of information in which he goes there. I know that a great many of the questions that are asked about Friendly Societies betray a lamentable degree of ignorancc of the first principles of such societies, and it is therefore not a matter of surprise if many gentlemen who go to the office, imperfectly informed as to the nature of the subject, ask questions which it is almost impossible for any human being to answer. Of course I do not believe my hon. Friend would ask questions of that character. In addition to the charge of £8,000 or £9,000 a year for this office there is still a heavy charge, owing to a system, which has now been discontinued, by which the Government guaranteed a certain rate of interest to Friendly Societies. There was, till lately, a heavy annual deficiency to be met by money voted by this House, arising from the action of the Legislature in guaranteeing a preferential rate of interest upon funds invested by Savings Banks and Friendly Societies with the National Debt Commisioners. That annual deficiency has now disappeared, in consequence of my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchegner having exercised his statutory powers, and paid up the capital deficiency in the Fund. To this extent, therefore, the Legislature has shown considerable consideration to the institutions dealing with the insurance of the working classes One of the principal duties of the Friendly Societies' office is found in the 10th section of the Act of 1875, which lays down that the Chief Registrar is, from time to time, to circulate such information as is of general use, or, as he believes, will be of use to members of Friendly Societies; and one of the most useful functions of his office is the sending out to every society whose rules are registered a form of Return reminding societies of their obligation to value their assets; and in the speeches made to-night, I am surprised that this point has so far escaped the attention of hon. Members. I mean the supreme importance of this valuation. It is a point that too often escapes the attention of members of these societies, and of those who are interested in their welfare. Some years ago the Chief Registrar, under the authority of the Treasury, circulated to every Friendly Society whose rules were registered, a memorandum on the value of Friendly Societies; and I will read one sentence from that memorandum—

> "It is too often supposed that a society which has funds on hand is solvent. If the funds at the end of one year are larger than they were the year before, it is too often supposed that the society is prosperous. The solvency of a Friendly Society"—

I ask the attention of every hon. Member who may discuss this point with his constituents—

> "The solvency of a Friendly Society depends, not on the money it has in hand, but whether the existing funds, together with the contributions bound to be paid by its members are enough to balance the amount of benefits members have a right to receive under the rules."

The main object of valuation is to find an answer to this question. If the money on hand is not enough to secure the benefit the member expects to realise, what is the use of his paying in? This duty, as I have said, is too much neglected. I give an instance of a single county. In Northampton there are 246 registered societies, and no fewer than 100 are in default with their Annual Returns, and there is no legislative means of compelling them to furnish these. So vital may this subject of valuation be held, that if I had the framing of this Resolution, moved by my hon. and gallant Friend, I should have asked the House to agree in an expression of regret that so many societies have failed to realise the necessity of a valuation of their assets, and to express the opinion that this failure deserves the consideration of the Government. I think that, perhaps, would be of more real use to societies in general, and would meet with their consent more readily, than some of the proposals that have been made. In addition to what the Registrar does for Friendly Societies there is, of course, the machinery set up by the Post Office, and which, I regret to say, has, as yet, been very little taken advantage of. We have had some of the figures quoted to-night. There seems to be some doubt about the Annual Return for last year; but from the commencement of this business in April, 1865 to December 31, 1889, the total insured for amount to annuities only £30,038, and insurances for death payments £10,161, and I need not point out that compared with the vast figures dealt with in the Returns of Friendly Societies and Industrial Insurance Societies, this is a trifling and most unsatisfactory result. Why the Post Office is not more generally made use of there are many reasons given. My hon. Friend the Member for the Wells Division of Somerset (Sir Richard Paget) has proposed that the Post Office should compete with other Provident Societies by employing canvassers or collectors. He has pointed out that the Postmaster General has in some sort sanctioned this and encouraged the action of Post Office officials in this respect by paying commission for annuities obtained, and he has proposed that the Post Office should extend this system and subsidise the agents of Friendly Societies, for the same purpose. Well, I do not think that would be satisfactory; I hardly think it is a practical proposal. But what I want to ask him and my hon. and gallant Friend is this: why should not they act—why should not they every Member of this House act—as agents of the Post Office in this respect? It is the fate of every Member of Parliament every year to address thousands of his fellow countrymen, and I cannot conceive a more useful object to which to apply a great deal of this oratory than explaining to the people the machinery which actually exists for giving them cheap insurance with perfect security. It has been said that the Post Office scheme is not generally known, and I believe that is very true. I believe there is a great deal in the suggestion just made by the hon. Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst), that employers of labour should take means for acquainting those in their employ with the facilities for insurance, the advantages and the cheapness of the Post Office system. Very few persons in discussing matters in relation to Friendly Societies seem to be aware of the different classes of societies and their different degrees of merit included under the term. There is a certain amount of confusion in the minds of the public on the subject, and for that confusion in a great measure the Act of 1875 is responsible, because it includes certain societies and associations which are only nominally Friendly Societies, but which are brought within some of the provisions of that Act. There are, as my hon. and gallant Friend has pointed out registered Friendly Societies, but there are also a large number of societies of which there is no account whatever given, for they are unregistered societies. My hon. and gallant Friend has spoken of them as mushroom concerns, but they are not necessarily mushroom concerns; some of the best conducted, some of the oldest established, some that show the best results have never registered themselves, but I admit there are among them concerns based upon unsound Tables that have short and disastrous careers. But what I wish hon. Members to remember is this—that the main difference in the classification of Friendly Societies is the difference between Friendly Societies proper and Collecting Societies, and the reason why Collecting Societies must always be a more expensive form of investing than Friendly Societies is that the latter are managed by members for members, and Collecting Societies or Industrial Assurance Societies are managed by managers for managers. In Collecting Societies and Industrial Assurance Companies the cost of management is rarely less—I remember only one instance in which it is less—than 40 per cent. of the premium income. Therefore, it follows that for every shilling a man invests, very nearly sixpence of it goes towards cost of management and salaries of managers. Is that to be stopped by legislation? I do not see how you can stop it. I do not see any reason why you should intefere with the discretion of investors. It may be necessary—nay, it was acknowledged to be be necessary by the Select Committee—to make some of the regulations more stringent; but you cannot interfere to stop people from putting their money into a concern if they choose to do so. What it is our duty to do is, as far as possible, to diffuse information on the subject, and to see that the provisions for making the Annual Returns of practical valuation are carried out. Collecting Societies, I may point out, as a means of education in thrift, are absolutely valueless. It is true that every member has a vote at the general meeting, and nominally a voice in the election of managers, but practically affairs are so managed, and distances are so great, that all an ordinary member knows of the vast staff of such as, for instance, the Royal Liver Society, of which most of us have heard, is the weekly visit of the collector to take away his subscription. By way of illustration, let me remind the House of what took place in the administration of this very society. I have just mentioned "The Royal Liver." The House will recollect that Mr. Lyulph Stanley was appointed to conduct an inquiry into the affairs of this society. He did so, and some of the revelations in the course of that inquiry attracted a considerable amount of public attention and indignation in Liverpool. It appeared that the managers received exorbitant fees, and that the two secretaries had been drawing £6,000 a year each in salaries. Now while Rule 64 of the society laid down that the annual meeting should be held in Liverpool, that rule was set aside by a special general meeting of the society held at Bristol, and the rule being thus repealed there remained no obligation upon the managers to hold an annual meeting in Liverpool, where the Head Office was situated, and they have never done so since. This incident shows how little control members of a Collecting Society have over the affairs of their society, and if that is the case with Collecting Societies, still more is it the case with Industral Assurance Companies which are brought under sections of the Friendly Societies Act, although they are in no sense Friendly Societies. They have no members, they have a board of directors and shareholders, they are joint stock concerns, registered as Assurance Companies at the Board of Trade, and the large body of policy holders have no voice in the management of affairs. Some hon. Members may remember the marvellous figures shown in the returns of the Prudential Assurance Society, an admirably managed concern; anyone who listened to the evidence of the manager given before the Select Committee, must have been impressed with the ability of this gentleman, and the wonderful success of the business. I have not a word to say against the management; what I am concerned with is this, to show the people of this country what an expensive means of investment they are adopting in preferring the Prudential, and institutions such as this, to the Post Office Insurance branch. The Prudential is conducted at a lower cost of management than any other of these Insurance Societies; thus, in 1887, its cost of management was 41·47 per cent. as compared with that of the Yorkshire Provident, the cost of management of which was 90·39 per cent., the premium income of the latter being £3,420, while the remuneration of its managers amounted to £3,089. The figures show that the Prudential had in 1887 8,000,000 of polices in existence in the Industrial branch alone of the value of £66,000,000, its premium income being £3,350,000. Last year the number of policies exceeded 9,000,000. The history of this concern is very remarkable, as it shows what vast sums are drawn from the pockets of those who are supposed to be least able to bear it. The hon. Member who last spoke said that the question with the working classes was not so much how to invest their savings as how to get money to save; but I think the figures I am about to quote show that the working classes are deeply interested in the question as to what is the best mode of investing their savings. About 40 years ago the Prudential started with 135 shareholders, with a nominal capital of £10,000, of which only £2,500 was paid up. A few years ago, in 1882, the nominal capital was increased to £200,000 by bonus additions paid to shareholders out of profits and reinvested in new shares. When the manager of the Prudential was asked before the Select Committee why the nominal capital was thus increased, he said it did not look well to be paying 100 per cent. on a nominal capital of £10,000, it looked better to pay 5 per cent. on £200,000. Now, hon. Members will remember that the only payments ever made by these shareholders amounted to £2,500, and that has now been increased to the value of £200,000, on which the company pays 5 per cent. Not only this, but the company is able to declare quinquennial bonuses, and the amount on this account at the last quinquennial period of 1886 amounted to £399,600—far the greater portion of this being in the industrial branch. Against the 9,000,000 policies of the industrial branch, the ordinary branch shows only 240,000. Upon what is this enormous income built up? Upon the premiums paid on the 9,000,000 policies extant, the average payment on each of which amounts to 1½d. a week, of which 25 per cent. goes to the collectors. This, I think, will show the hon. Member (Mr. Broadhurst) that it is important that the working classes should be careful of the way in which they invest their savings. Now, compare the terms offered by this excellent institution, this admirably managed institution, with those offered by the Post Office. The Post Office for 1d. a week at the age of 23 insures a man for £10, while the Prudential for the same sum at the same age insures only £7 12s. For 6d. a week the Post Office insures £70, while the Prudential only insures £45 12s. The Post Office, at the age of 23, insures £100 for the yearly premium of £1 18s. 6d., while the Prudential insures the same sum for a yearly premium of £2 12s. These facts should be known. If hon. Members, instead of coming to the House and making very unpracticable proposals about subsidising Friendly Societies, or paying capitation grants which Friendly Societies are the last to want, and those who know most about them are most earnest in deprecating—if, I say, hon. Members would exert themselves to make these facts known among their countrymen, they would be doing valuable service for the working classes. I have said that in some respects it seems to us that a case has been made out for legislative interference by the result of the inquiry by Select Committee, and we have, at the present moment, a Bill prepared, though not yet introduced, based on the recommendations of that Committee in so far as they deal with Collecting Societies and Insurance Societies; but I must be allowed to express my regret that the hon. Baronet (Sir R. Paget) takes such an unfortunate view of subsidising Friendly Societies. These societies do not want this. I have been for the last 5 or 6 years in constant communication with managers and officials of the Affiliated Orders, and I know they certainly do not want it, and I should not be surprised if at the next Congress there is a strong expression of opinion, possibly an indignant expression, against it. Did not my hon. and gallant Friend at the outset of his speech declare that he was most careful not to propose anything that would interfere with the independence of Friendly Societies? Would not a subsidy interfere with that independence? I think it would be difficult to persuade the House that if the Government feel justified in giving a subsidy, it was not also incumbent upon them to assume some responsibility. State aid means State control and responsibility, and the effect upon the insuring public, upon the working classes who make use of these societies, would be—that the Government had undertaken a guarantee of that which there is no power on earth to guarantee. I should not be in order in discussing a Resolution which stands further down on the Paper in the name of the hon. Baronet, but I may refer to it, for he has practically discussed it in his speech. My hon Friend says:

> "That with the view of inducing Friendly and Provident Societies to place themselves in a position of financial security, some contribution might reasonably be afforded by the State to such societies as are able, after actuarial valuation, to obtain a certificate from a public auditor that their resources are adequate to secure to all their members the whole of the benefits offered by their existing regulatins."

I can hardly follow the hon. Baronet. Does he know of any public auditor who is competent to undertake the actuarial valuation of the resources of a society? It is no part of the duty of an auditor, it must be the duty of an actuary, and even he finds himself much puzzled. I never have yet found an actuary ready to state when a society is absolutely solvent. A society may appear absolutely solvent, but an epidemic or other cause may sweep away the basis of that solvency. Would the State subsidy cease when the society lapsed from solvency into insolvency? The circumstances are such as to make it impossible for the State or any private individual to guarantee the sum required. It must depend on the rate at which new members are enrolled and the age at which they are enrolled. How can we guarantee that? It is impossible to do it. It would be a great benefit conferred on the people of this country if we took pains to instruct them, instead of calling on the Government to subsidise the societies; and if we would acquaint ourselves with the circumstances and character of the different societies and institutions, in order that we may be able to give them some guidance in the matter. One portion of the Resolution I have the greatest sympathy with, because it carries out in the form suggested by the Select Committee of 1889 a proposal made on my own Motion—

> "That the sound principles of provident insurance should be included in the subjects prescribed by the Education Code for instruction in elementary schools."

It has been said in the Debate to-night that the reason why people will not make better use of the existing means of insurance for annuity and superannuation is partly that they are ignorant of the advantage of it, and partly that they cannot be got to take an interest in what is only a possibility. Death they look upon as a certainty that must come to all men, sickness as a probability which comes too often to every man, but old age as a distant possibility which may or may not come to any man. Well, in that respect the people of this country have been spoken of as if they were in a state of invincible ignorance. I would ask, with reference to the last paragraph of the Resolution, whether there is such a thing as invincible ignorance. At the beginning of this century it was looked upon as a natural thing that a large proportion of the people of this country should be neither able to read or write. Large masses of the people were looked upon as invincibly ignorant. What has been done? We have made education compulsory. No child can now grow up ignorant of reading and writing. It is perhaps too much to expect that in the course of years no child will grow up ignorant of the sound principles of insurance, but I believe it is possible to do a great deal to equip children in the public schools with that degree of knowledge which will enable them to form a sounder judgment, not only of the advantages of insurance, but of all the dangers which beset them, so that they may make proper provision for themselves. I do hope that one result of this discussion will be that some provision may be made, that some Tables may be prepared, or possibly a handbook on the elementary principles of insurance may be approved by my right hon. Friend the Vice President of the Committee of Council (Sir W. Hart Dyke), which may form part of the instruction in elementary schools. I feel quite certain that the House must have taken an interest in the statement made by my hon. Friend. It will be read throughout the country, not only by members of Friendly Societies, but by those who have leisure, and who are anxious to help the working classes to better means than they now possess. I think my hon. Friend may rest assured that the Government will never regard this matter with indifference, nor refrain from encouraging the laudable efforts of the working classes to make provident assurance and to secure themselves in some degree against what is the common lot of humanity—sickness and death.

*(7.7.) MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): In listening to the speeches of the Mover and Seconder of the Motion, I was bound to draw a broad line of distinction between the sentiments which animated them and the proposals which they put before the House. With the sentiments they have expressed and the objects they have in view, I am in entire sympathy; but I agree with the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down that the particular proposals which they have advocated are unsatisfactory and impracticable. The hon. Gentleman (Colonel Howard Vincent) talked in a loose sort of way of the State contributing 5s. or 10s. a year in respect of each member of certain Friendly Societies, in order to provide pensions for their old age. But the sum that would be produced in this way would be infinitesimally small. In the case of a man 40 years of age, and who continued to make subscriptions till he reached the age of 65 years of age, it would yield him a few pence per week. The hon. Member will see the total insufficiency of his suggestion if he remembers that under the Scotch Police Superannuation Scheme the House last year provided a sum of £10 per year per man, in addition to the subscription of 2½ per cent. of his means by every member of the Force. The House will perceive, therefore, that these somewhat crude suggestions are

utterly insufficient to meet the necessities of the case. The hon. Member made some remarks on the German scheme, but did not indicate the weakest point of that scheme. The weakest point of the German scheme is that the pension does not begin till a man has reached the age of 70 years, and that the total amount of pensions varies from 2s. to 3s. 8d. Any one acquainted with the expenditure of the working men of this country must see that pensions in the German scale would be totally inadequate here. I rejoice to hear the sentiments expressed by Gentlemen opposite. It shows that where the House sets itself practically to deal with this question, it will be found not to be a Party question, but will secure the earnest consideration of Gentlemen of both sides of the House. The weakness of a working man's position compared with that of a man of property is want of security for the future. His wages are sufficient to keep him in more or less comfort, but they are not sufficient to enable him to make provision for the future. He has to provide for the contingency of sickness, and, in the Railway Friendly Societies, the payment necessary for that purpose is generally 7d. a week. Then there is the provision for death, for permanent disablement, and for old age. It is perfectly true that only a very small proportion of those men who start life at 20 arrive at the age of 65, but that is no more an argument why the wise should not make provision for that contingency, than the fact that very few houses are burned is a reason why we should not insure against fire. Is it possible for a working man to provide against these contingencies? I hold that it is absolutely impossible out of his own resources. In order to provide a pension of 10s. a week at the age of 65, it requires a subscription of 8d. a week for 40 years, beginning at the age of 20. This, together with the provision for sickness and death, comes to a figure totally beyond the power of the working man to pay. There is, I think, one way only in which this great question can be solved; and that is in some such fashion as has been adopted in the German Empire. One essential condition of a system of insurance for the working classes is absolute security; and no private company can guarantee that. Another essential condition is that the association should be ubiquitous. Friendly Societies are generally societies for a very small district, while the characteristic of our working classes is mobility. They must shift about in order to get work, and they require an association which will touch them in every part of the country. Another element is steadiness of contribution. The secret of the success of the existing societies is, that only a few of those who subscribe persistently maintain their subscriptions, and so ultimately get the benefit. How is that persistency and steadiness to be maintained? Speaking to my constituents on the subject of thrift, I suggested a scheme of voluntary insurance. The most intelligent and the ablest of the working men of Aberdeen objected to a voluntary system as of no use. To be of value a system must be compulsory. Otherwise it would be impossible to get a series of weekly payments continued over a period of 40 years. The cost of collections, which under the present system must be very great, might be reduced to a figure comparatively trifling by adopting the method in use in Germany. The practical difficulty of collection is met there in the simplest manner by the issue of cards of 47 squares, one of which is stamped every week by a man's employer. The only expense in that system is the cost of the cards and the stamps. Another very important question is the amount of premium. I believe half of the working men of this country earn less than £52 a year; and out of that sum it is impossible for him to pay to a sick fund and an insurance fund. Large contributions must be made from the State—large in respect of their proportion to the premium, but not large in respect of the total sum ultimately payable by the State. Taking the case of Scotland, I believe that to provide for insurance, for orphans, for permanent disablement, and for old age beginning at 65, varying from 5s. to 10s., the cost to the taxpayer would ultimately be substantially less than the cost of the poor rate at the present time, while the poor rate must almost, if not entirely, disappear. I hope the Government will study the question, and I believe it will be found possible to establish such a scheme as I have indicated. The difficulty will, of course, be the interim period. On account of the high premiums that must be paid for those over 20 years of age, how that is to be solved is a question which will tax the resources of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I was glad to hear the remark of the hon. Member (Sir R. Paget) that there is no money he would more willingly part with than money to enable provision to be made for the old age of the working classes. In that the hon. Baronet, I believe, expressed the real sentiments of men of property throughout the country; and when the Government are supported by men of such sentiments, I believe they will find no difficulty in introducing a practical and useful scheme.

(7.22.) MR. HOLLOWAY (Gloucestershire, Stroud): I rise to give my best support to the Motion of the hon. Member for Sheffield. As I have had considerable experience in establishing and assisting in the management of Benefit Societies, I think I can explain to the House exactly what is required to bring about an enormous improvement in the usefulness of such societies throughout the country, and in doing this I wish it to be distinctly understood that I do not desire to say a single word against the Chief Registrar, nor against any of his assistants. I am very much afraid that the greater part of their labour is wasted and thrown away upon the working men throughout the country, whom it does not deter from joining and investing their money to unsound and untrustworthy societies. Our Reports of the Registrar are very interesting to this extent: they show us that there is an almost universal desire amongst working men to belong to some kind of Benefit Society, and they show us that thousands of societies which working men join are utterly unsound and worthless. But they do not show us upon what principle Benefit Societies could be founded to secure absolute safety to those who invest in them. That is the chief defect of the present system, and I venture to submit that the time has come when a costly public Department should give the people the benefit of great experience by formulating a set of standard rules, upon the very best and soundest principles, and should recommend those model rules for adoption to all who might apply for them. No others should receive the stamp of registration. I think it is a melancholy state of things which this Report of the Chief Registrar proclaims to the world. Here, we are told—no doubt after most elaborate calculations—that the two largest and most popular Benefit Societies in the Kingdom are insolvent with a deficiency of over £3,000,000 sterling. The exact figures are:—The Oddfellows have a deficiency of £769,335, whilst the Foresters have the enormous deficiency of £2,632,482, a total between them of £3,401,817. And when it is considered that there are thousands of smaller societies throughout the country in a still worse condition than these, the case for a sweeping reform of the present system becomes a very strong one. Now, the Registrar in pointing to those great deficiences clearly indicates the two principal causes which have produced them: first, the contributions from members of those societies have not been equal to the benefits received by them; and, second, the absurd principle of a uniform rate of contribution at all ages of life. Those are the two principal causes of these enormous deficiencies, and at first sight the remedy would seem to be either to increase the contribution from members or to decrease the future benefits to be received; but that is easier said than done. Take, for example, the case of the Foresters, with 3,245 courts or branches; 553 courts have a surplus, and it would be a cruel injustice to ask them to contribute extra payments towards the deficiencies of the 2,692 courts that have been so recklessly mismanaged. Indeed, it would require a scale of contributions from members much beyond their ability to pay to wipe out so great a deficiency, as it would have to be not only sufficient to place the society on a safe basis for the future, but contemplate an extra payment in addition, to wipe out the present deficiency. I am afraid that any such increased contribution would prevent new members from joining, and thus increase the difficulty, for we all know that it is the infusion of young blood that keeps many of the old societies alive. Now, I think it is very generally admitted that in all cases of commercial industry where there is insolvency, the wisest plan is to wind up the business, pay what dividend is possible, and, if necessary, reform the concern upon a sound basis. I have always given that advice to insolvent societies, and in several instances I have valued every member's share in the assets of the society and started it again upon a new career of sound prosperity. That is the proper remedy which the Registrar should recommend to every Benefit Society which, upon an actuarial valuation, shows a deficiency. I do not mean that the funds of the insolvent societies should be paid over to the members to be spent and, perhaps, wasted, but that each man's share should be ascertained and placed to his individual credit in the books of the society as a savings bank investment, to accumulate at interest as an annuity fund for his old age. This is permissible under the section of the Friendly Societies Act of 1875, and having done that you have only to arrange a scale of contributions amply sufficient to provide all future benefit, and you will have placed the members of that society upon a new career of ever increasing prosperity. Let me make this principle of individual ownership of the accumulating funds clearly understood. All Benefit Societies may be classed under one or the other of two descriptions. They are either what are termed dividing societies, which divide their funds annually, or at fixed periods of three, five, or seven years, as the case may be, or they are what are termed permanent societies, which never divide their funds, but allow them to accumulate as corporate property. And it is a remarkable fact that the dividing societies, although they are utterly unreliable in time of need, are by far the most popular, and are to be found in almost every village and workshop throughout the country. I suppose we may account for this preference upon the principle that working men like to have their share in the purse which they have helped to fill. The scheme which is in operation in my constituency, and which has already been referred to by the hon. Member for Sheffield, combines the two systems under one set of rules. The funds which remain in hand at the end of every year, after having provided for sickness and the cost of management, are equally divided amongst the members. They are not actually paid over to them as in the old dividing societies, to be wasted in feasting and rejoicing, but each member's share is placed to his individual credit, just as a saving bank investment to accumulate at interest for his benefit in old age or at death, so that under one contribution equitably arranged members provide for sickness, old age, and death, and as long as they live they enjoy an ever-increasing prosperity. The greatest difficulties in the old societies is the annuity question; but upon my plan every member creates an annuity fund, and if he lives to old age it becomes a substantial one. Of course, an equal division of the annual surplus between the members of all ages, necessitates a scale of contribution to cover the extra cost of sickness arising from increasing age, but with the statistics at our command, that is the simplest thing in the world. In the Stroud Society the ordinary contribution for a single share, to ensure 10s. a week during sickness, is a penny a day for all ages up to 30 years, as there is no appreciable increase of sickness up to that age, but from 30 years upwards there is a steady average increase; and to place old and young members upon an exact equality the cost of this sickness must be provided for. This is accomplished by increasing the contribution a half-penny per month every year beyond 30. Thus members up to 30 pay 2s. 4d. per month; at 31 they pay 2s. 4½d. per month; and at 35 2s. 6½d.; at 40 2s. 9d. and so on up to the age of 65, when all their accumulations come back to them as an annuity fund. In every Sick Benefit Society there must of necessity be an annual surplus for disposal, inasmuch as the contributions should always be sufficient to cover any extra strain upon them arising from an epidemic or any kind of excessive sickness, and the equitable distribution of this surplus is the pith of the whole matter. If you give it to be spent in feasting, as is commonly the practice in the dividing societies, it is wasted. If you accumulate it as corporate property, in the old-fashioned way, members of 30 or 40, or even 50 years standing have no more interest in it than the young member who joined only a few months ago. But if you apply it as a savings bank investment in each member's own right, you start them on a career of ever-increasing prosperity, you give them a most valuable, practical lesson in thrift, and secure them against poverty in their old age. There is another very great advantage in this system of individual ownership in the funds of Benefit Societies. The society is always solvent. The liabilities cannot by any possibility exceed its assets. The savings bank account of each member represents his full claim upon the society, and when it is withdrawn, through death or any other cause, it has no effect whatever upon the other members. No actuary is ever required, as every member knows his exact position, and receives a certificate at the end of every year stating the exact amount that is due to him. I do not know how far I may be allowed to refer to the Stroud scheme, but its success may be described as miraculous. In 16 years' operation in my constituency it has absorbed almost the entire manhood of the district. Our original penny a day members have now £35 15s. 4d. each standing to their credit in the books of the society, which is some pounds more than their total contributions to the society, during the whole period of the membership; so that they have enjoyed sick pay when ill, free medical attendance at all times, and every benefit for something less than nothing. All their money remains intact in their own right, and is rapidly increasing every year. Compare this with the miserable £10 or £12 payable at death only, by the old fashioned permanent societies to members of 30, 40, or 50 years' standing, and the popularity of the new system may be understood. I have simply given some particulars of the Stroud scheme, to show that there is an easy and most perfect remedy for what I think is generally admitted to be a great national evil; and if this Motion is adopted and an inquiry held, I venture to predict a complete revolution in the principles of existing societies on the lines which I have sketched, that will confer enormous advantage upon the working classes.

*Mr. HOWARD VINCENT: Under all the circumstances, I will now ask leave to withdraw my Motion. I think the discussion that has taken place will have done considerable good, and I believe that Her Majesty's Government will, at any rate, take into consideration that part of my proposal which embodies the educational recommendation of the Select Committee, and I hope they will also consider the other recommendations of that Committee.

Mr. GROTRIAN (Hull, E.): Before the question is disposed of, I should like to say a few words on the subject. I regard the question as one of great importance, and I do not like to allow it to be disposed of without venturing, even at the risk of detaining the House for a few moments, to offer one or two remarks upon it. I may say that I entirely agree in the sentiments expressed by the Mover and Seconder of the Resolution, yet I must confess that, according to my view of the matter, the adoption of this Resolution would be both inexpedient and impracticable. I must express my own conviction that the leading Friendly Societies would resent State aid in any form. They hold that they are quite capable of managing their own affairs; and, although there have been some defects in the management of certain Friendly Societies, yet, on the whole, it is shown that the leading societies are admirably managed. Reference has been made to two of the leading Friendly Societies of England, and I may say, with regard to those two societies, I know that when on a former occasion State aid has been suggested, they have resented any such intervention. Those societies are fully alive to the defects which characterise the management of friendly institutions of this kind, and are endeavouring in their own way to remedy those defects. I hold in my hand the 109th Report of the Kingston-on-Hull District of the Ancient Order of Foresters, a society which is numerically the strongest in the United Kingdom, and that Report shows that particular attention is being paid to the question of solvency. It says—

> "We cannot but express our regret that only one Court in the district shows a surplus of assets over liabilities."

I venture to think that it is most important that these large societies should not in any way——

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at ten minutes before Eight o'clock till To-morrow.

by Contract with H.M.'s Government. An Asterisk at the commencement of a Speech indicates revision by the Member.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 11th March, 1891.

QUARTER SESSION (BOROUGHS (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Address for—

"Return of all Boroughs in England and Wales having a separate Court of Quarter Sessions, showing the number of prisoners tried at each Court in each of the years 1888, 1889, and 1890."—(*Mr. Talbot.*)

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufacture, namely, Mr. T. E. Ellis and Sir Joseph Pease; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Briggs Priestley and Mr. Randell.

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY further reported from the Committee: That they had discharged from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, in respect of the Factories and Workshops Bill, and Factory and Workshops Act (1878) Amendment Bill, namely, Mr. Broadhurst, and had appointed in substitution, Mr. Storey.

Report to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (CERTIFICATED TEACHERS).

Order [16th February] for a Return relative thereto, read and discharged, and instead thereof:—

CERTIFICATED TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

"Return ordered, "showing (1) total number of Certificated Teachers employed in Public Elementary Schools during the year ended the 31st day of August, 1890; (2) the ages and periods of service of such Teachers; and (3) the average number of years of service of such Teachers at each age; in the following form:—

Ages.					Years of Service.		
	Masters.		Mistresses.				
Ages.	Number at each age.	Average number of years of service at each age.	Number at each age.	Average number of years of service at each age.	Length of Service.	Number of Masters.	Number of Mistresses.
20					1 year		
21					2 years		
22					3 "		
23					4 "		
24					5 "		
25					6 "		
&c. &c.					&c. &c.		

—(*Sir Richard Temple.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SMALL HOLDINGS BILL.—(No. 7.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(12.35.) MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill I think I am entitled to express satisfaction at the improved position which the question occupies. It has now been before Parliament for some years. The present Bill is only a small measure, and it proposes to provide facilities for the acquisition of land by the labouring population and others in the rural districts. In 1888 the Government granted a Select Committee to examine into the whole question. I welcomed that Committee with great satisfaction as an acknowledgment that the question was to be no longer dealt with as a visionary one, but that it came within the range of practical politics. The Committee was of a very representative character, and it sat for two Sessions, taking evidence from all quarters. After examining some 40 witnesses and taking interesting evidence on all parts and sections of the question, it produced a Report in 1890. I do not propose to detain the House by going into the details of that Report, but I trust that hon. Members will have studied, from the evidence, the chief difficulties connected with the subject. I will merely quote a sentence or two from the conclusions the Committee came to unanimously. They say that the extension of small holdings is a matter of national importance in the interests of the rural population, and also as an addition to the security of property generally. They believe that the desired object can be attained without serious risk or loss, and they go on to state that the working of a system of small holdings will be an encouragement to the rural population and will increase the attractions of rural life. The Committee unanimously adopted the principle of the Small Holdings Bill with certain modifications which I am inclined to think are rather an improvement than otherwise. Finally, they recommend that a sum not exceeding £5,000,000 shall be devoted to the purpose of providing small holdings. They conclude with an expression of hope that no time will be lost in introducing legislation to give effect to their recommendations. I thank the Government for having lost no time in taking the matter in hand. The Report was presented in June or July, and in the following Session an announcement of a Small Holdings Bill was made in the Speech from the Throne. No doubt the proposal meets with opposition from certain quarters; some oppose it from economic reasons, and others because they think that any scheme of the kind would be a failure. I do not wish to argue these points, because I claim that we are all agreed in the object we have in view, namely, to benefit the labourers by making their life more attractive and prosperous, and opening out a career for them other than that of the workhouse. That being so, I respectfully ask the House to assent to the Second Reading of this Bill, and by so doing affirm the great, beneficent and desirable objects contained in it, justified as they are by the recommendations of the Select Committee. Conversing a short time ago with an old friend who has a four-acre allotment, I asked him why he grew corn? His reply was such that I could find no rejoinder to it. He said, "There is my stack; there are my fields; and I feel all right for the winter." No one without experience can realise the enormous amount of labour put into the land by the holder of a small allotment and his family. I know, from experience, that everybody does something—no child is too small; and there is always something to be done in planting or weeding. No hired labour is engaged, but the work performed produces the same good results. Adam Smith, in his *Wealth of Nations*, tells us that the small proprietor, who knows every part of his little territory, takes a pleasure in cultivating it, and is generally most industrious, intelligent, and successful. It tends also to encourage thrift, and I could mention numerous cases to show how these men, out of their hard earnings, have made savings. One case comes to my mind, and it does not stand alone. In a village near Huntingdon the Rev. Mr. Hopkinson, a landowner as well as a clergyman, offered in 1886 50 acres of land to his labourers, and money to buy cows as well. His offer was accepted by 12 labourers, but there were only two who required assistance towards buying a cow. He gave the necessary assistance and was repaid in 12 months. Speaking in Gloucestershire, a short time ago, I happened to mention the word "wheelwright." A man came to me subsequently and said, "I am a wheelwright; I have two sons with me; trade is bad, and one of my sons went away last week to get employment. If I had had such a holding as that you recommend I might have been able to keep my family together, and tided over the period of bad trade." And this is not the whole of it, because the young man would have been at home instead of going into Gloucester to compete with other wheelwrights, where competition is perhaps too severe already. There is another reason why both farmers and landlords should advocate this proposal. If the present system goes on much longer the old all-round, skilful agricultural labourer will disappear altogether. He is fast disappearing now, and will not be kept unless some such proposition as this is adopted. In travelling abroad I have been much struck with the skill of the labourers, and the good feeling which exists between them and the farmers. Almost to a man, they possess a home and some agricultural land. Some time ago I was in a rural part of Belgium and I had a conversation with a man and his son who were working for a farmer for five francs a day between the two; but I found that the man had 12 acres of land, two or three cows, and some poultry, and yet he was delighted to let himself out to the farmers when his services were wanted, to the mutual advantage of each. If once this system is adopted, the farmers will be benefited more than any others by having an ample supply of good labour at their command. There is one other reason which induces me to ask the House to deal generously and seriously with the matter. The enclosure of land in the last century has had a disastrous effect upon the peasant class. From 1760 to 1867 there have been upwards of 7,000,000 acres, or more than one-fifth of all the cultivated land in England enclosed, with very inadequate provision to secure the rights of the labourers and others connected with the land. I admit that public good may have resulted ultimately from the enclosure of this land. Capital has been applied to the drainage and reclamation of the land, which has done good to the country, and in no case could these improvements have taken place under the old system of open fields. Not only has the land been improved in quality, but its fertility has been doubled and trebled, and stock has not only been improved in form, but doubled in weight. This would not have been possible under the old system; but while admitting all this I contend that the process has been unjust in its operation to the peasant class, and disastrous in its results to the cultivating peasant. They have ceased their connection with ownership, and have been for all time reduced to the position of mere wage receivers, or inmates of the poor house. I maintain that this great class is entitled to consideration at our hands, and, if for no other reason, I urge upon the House the desirability of considering seriously a measure of this importance; I do not propose to go into the details of the Bill. Its principle has been admitted by the Select Committee, and all that hon. Members will do in voting for the Second Reading, is to pledge themselves to some measure on the lines of the Report of the Select Committee on Small Holdings. The Government have promised to bring in a measure; at present we do not know what its provisions are to be; perhaps they are not yet settled. I will, however, refer to the three main principles of the present Bill, which I believe to be essential to the good working of any measure. One of the clauses contains a proposal to hire land. There are cases in which the Local Authorities could not afford to purchase it. For instance, there is land in the neighbourhood of large towns, the prospective value of which is too high altogether to enable it to be purchased for agricultural purposes, although the land itself may not be wanted for other purposes for 5, 10, 15, 20, or 25 years, and is the very spot which ought to be used for these small holdings. The Bill also contains a provision for the payment of a certain portion of money down, the balance remaining as a perpetual quit rent. I know there are those who think the land ought to be sold out and out without conditions, and that the small holders should become the owners of the property, but I think I can show that that would be bad for the labourers and would defeat the object I have in view, which is not to secure absolute ownership for cultivation purposes. If land is wanted for other purposes—for building or letting—it should be acquired by other than public money. I think it would be a mistake if we did not attach certain conditions and enforce them. It is said that such holdings would not be profitable. On the contrary, I think they would be very profitable, and they would be all to the advantage of the labouring classes. No mortgage could be raised on them, nor could they be sold or devised. We have the example of other countries where such holdings exist—North Holland, Belgium, and Denmark—where the holders are recognised by the community, and are considered as freeholders in every sense of the word. Some years ago some plots of land in the County of Oxford were purchased under the land scheme of Feargus O'Connor, and were sold subject to a quit-rent of £9 per annum. It is astonishing how well taken up to this day that land has been, but the plots were purchased for small sums within the scope of the rural population. A tenant at a quit-rent remains to all intents and purposes the proprietor; and, above all, under this plan the small holder will be safe. It has been said that this constitutes a dual ownership. I must deny that it is anything of the sort. The Local Authorities will be no more dual owners because they receive a yearly quit-rent than they are in regard to the Poor Law because they receive a rate. These two points taken together will give the advantage I have named, and enable the Local Authority to impose certain conditions as to sub-letting and sub-division. Failing, this I am sure that no scheme can be successful. If the holdings were taken out and out, in the attempt to form a race of small landowners this would happen: when trade was good the owners of the holdings would be inclined to sub-let and impose a rent-charge. On this point I recently read a very interesting passage in Mr. Lecky's *History of England in the 18th Century*. Speaking of this very position in Ireland at a period just before the close of the last century he said—

> "The general rental of the country was undoubtedly low, but the poorer peasantry reaped no benefit from it. Gradations of middle men, often four or five deep, intervened between the owners and the cultivators of the soil."

That is what we want to prevent. The small holder under this plan is safe from the temptations of the money-lender. The owner will by this system be relieved from the competition of the capitalists and of the men who want to buy land in order to re-let it; and he will only have to compete with people who want the land for cultivating purposes. Take the case of Minster Lovell. There are there holdings which have been purchased by shopkeepers and others of the neighbouring town. The holdings have been bought for a small sum, subject to a quit-rent of £9 10s. The owners have sub-let, and there are men on the estate paying as tenants £16 and £17 per annum. I believe that the plan I propose would create a numerous class, who would be rooted on the soil, whose holdings would take some such name as "cottage farms," who would be to all intents and purposes freeholders, and who would be regarded as such. It is interesting to notice how every writer, whether English or foreign, who is interested in the prosperity of the soil, has laid the greatest stress on the necessity of some such system as this, which will keep the people on the land. Profit is a secondary consideration with these men. They all agree that to root the people on the soil is the primary thing. In our own country King Henry VII., when he found that his landowners were depopulating the land for the sake of cattle, summoned them before him and stated—"You wish to make money; the welfare, and defence, and stability of the country rest with me; and the cattle will not help us in time of need." The King then decreed that every landowner should under pain of forfeiture have a dwelling-house for every 40 statute acres he possessed. In the same way we have the Preemption Acts and the Homestead Acts of the United States—although the conditions in those countries are, no doubt, different. There is also the more recent case of the provinces of Canada, the main point in all these enactments being to get the people fixed on the land. I notice that the Report of the Commission on Labour of the United States recommends such alteration of the law as will stringently secure that actual occupation shall take place. I am glad to see that the Select Committee have recognised that principle, though it is quite true they have reduced the amount of the quit rent which in the Bill is three-fourths of the purchase money. They so arranged that under their recommendation the quit rent would ultimately become much smaller. Probably that will be an improvement; but, at the same time, I trust the Government will attach to this principle the importance which it demands. I am afraid I have wearied the House on this point, but the point I want to enforce is that we have no right to touch this question and use public money in connection with it except for cultivation and occupation. And, in conclusion, I would ask the House to consider the social aspect of the case. We are having strange doctrines taught up and down the country at the present time. Some of those doctrines are extremely good, while others are extremely wild and impracticable. In France, in the large towns — Paris, Marseilles, and Lyons—the latter doctrines are rampant; but outside the large towns those doctrines have not made a yard of progress, simply because they are met by millions of men with some property, who have that feeling which belongs to property, which I should like to see immensely increased in this country. In England we have a proletariat which I cannot find in any other country in Europe—a landless peasantry. To my mind there is a national danger if that state of things continues, for though wealth and trade and commerce have in times past created very brilliant epochs in the history of nations, yet I think it would be difficult to find an instance in which the abiding character of a country is not wrapped up immediately in the land, and with a numerous, a contented, and a prosperous peasantry. I hope the Government will accept the Second Reading of this Bill. It seems to me that the right hon. Gentleman opposite has an opportunity which no Minister in this generation has had offered to him for the bettering of the great mass of the people of this country, not only in the rural parts, but also in the towns. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will approach this subject in no perfunctory manner, and with no feeling of redeeming a promise merely, but that he will treat it in a way which the importance of the subject demands. The right hon. Gentleman has the same opportunity that Stein and Hardenberg had in Prussia; and likewise the same opposition which they had to encounter. The right hon. Gentleman has the economic school to oppose, and also the owners, the capitalists, and the holders of large farms. But the stock argument of Stein and Hardenberg was this:—"That is all very well. If you can prove that a syndicate, by means of labour, could cultivate the country to the best advantage, still it is to the welfare of the country that they should not be allowed to do it." Therefore, I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to study this question and to remember that perhaps the most important function of the Board of Agriculture is to look after the prosperity of the most numerous class connected with that agriculture. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman to deal with the question in a generous manner, which will strike the imagination of the country as a new departure. Under any circumstances, I consider that the acceptance of the principle of this Bill by the House of Commons opens up to-day, in conjunction with other measures, a new era for the country population in England that may be properly called their regeneration. I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time.—(*Mr. Jesse Collings.*)

*(1.15.) SIR H. SELWIN-IBBETSON (Essex, Epping): In rising to second this Motion I will not occupy the attention of the House at any length. I, however, desire to say a few words on the Second Reading, because I have had some small opportunities of forming a fair judgment on this question. Before the Committee was granted in 1888 I advocated in Parliament and in the country the necessity of doing something of this kind for the purpose of re-establishing labour, if possible, in our midst. No one who lives in the country—in purely agricultural districts—can help being aware of the fact that the best part of our labouring population has been drawn away from the country by the supposed advantages of living in towns. I attribute much of that depopulation to the fact that the labourer has no inducement now to remain in the rural districts, and I am satisfied that if a prospect, or a hope, can be held out to the labourer that by industry, skill, and thrift he may be able to improve his social position, and perhaps to become even an owner of land himself, it will do much to give stability to our labouring population and to keep our best hands in the country. I watched the labours of the Committee, over which the right hon. Member for the Western Division of Birmingham presided, with a great deal of interest, and was glad to see that they practically gave the weight of their authority to the principle embodied in this Bill. The hon. Member for the Bordesley Division has stated many reasons in support of the Bill, but I will not go into details on the matter, because I fear that on some of them I may not be in accord with him. The point I mainly look to is to establish, if we can, the principle of small holdings in the country, and details may be left for subsequent discussion. There is one point the hon. Member has touched on with regard to which I only slightly differ from him. It is the proposal to allow a certain portion only of the purchase money to be paid by the purchaser on his acquiring the land, and to allow the rest to remain absolutely as a quit-rent for ever. In this respect I cannot go so far as the hon. Member, for the reason that I believe the effect of leaving so large a portion of the money practically as a quit rent will be to take away from the man the greatest inducement he will have for energy and industry in the cultivation of the land. I agree that, in the first instance, it may be necessary and judicious to afford a man with a small capital the opportunity of purchasing what may ultimately become a freehold for him, by leaving for a time a portion of the purchase money as a quit rent; but, at the same time, I should like to see the hope held out to the man that he may in time work off that quit-rent, and become wholly and really the possessor of the property. I am satisfied that would conduce to the energy the man would put into the holding, and I believe it would be an important improvement of the Bill. However, I look upon the question we are discussing to-day simply as the affirmation of a principle which I have long had at heart—a principle which, if carried out, will do much to re-establish the popularity of the labourer in our rural districts, and may thus become a means of drawing back to us again much of the agricultural labour we have lost. I join with the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division (Mr. Jesse Collings) in the satisfaction he has expressed at the fact that the Government foreshadowed in the Speech from the Throne their intention to deal with the question. I ask them to sanction the Second Reading of the Bill as an evidence that they are in earnest in the matter, and I would strongly urge them not to allow this opportunity to pass without doing something in a direction which, I believe, may be of great material benefit to the agricultural districts and to the people of the country.

*(1.20.) MR. CUST (Lincolnshire, Stamford): I venture, Sir, for the first time to-day to ask the indulgence of the House, because of all the subjects that have been under debate since I have had the honour of a seat in this House, I think the question of small holdings is the one in which my constituents feel and have the most vital interest. At the time of my election the strongest and safest ground on which I could appeal to the electors to support the Government was on the Government's agricultural policy. It is possible that a great many of them do not judge the merits of the two great Political Parties by very high standards of policy. They are most of them agricultural labourers, pure and simple, who are obliged to work on the land for their living, and who fail unfortunately, in a great many instances, to live by the land. I am quite certain, Sir, that it was not in any question of Home Rule, or any question of Disestablishment, not even in the ideal symmetry of one man one vote, that they felt a tithe of the interest and sympathy which they gave to the question of allotments and agricultural holdings. And, Sir, I think they were justified. Now, what was their position? They had a vote, it is true, which they were flattered into giving to one side or the other every four or five years, but in the intervals they were helpless and almost hopeless. They were as much bound to the soil and to the *status* in which they were born as it is possible for a man to be who is nominally and politically free. Their single alternative was to plunge into the still greater dangers and miseries of some great town and add to its crowd, and to its competition, and so to do harm to the land they had left, harm to the town they came to, harm to themselves personally, and, in the long run, harm to the country at large. It is true, Sir, that some few years ago they had one bright moment of a more hopeful future. They put their faith in a Political Party and trusted its golden promises. They sent that Party to power to fulfil its undertaking, but I am bound to say they were most blackly disappointed. Then they turned to another quarter. They had learned some wisdom by that experience, and it remains for the present Government to justify their new faith. The two Allotment Bills have been in some measure a first instalment, and I believe and know that the labourers welcomed those Bills, and have been very grateful for them. Although I am bound to admit that their gratitude has not been so blindly partial as to exclude a certain somewhat severe criticism with regard to the details of those measures, with much of which I personally agree. But they recognised at last the wish of the Government to help them, and they were content to wait for a further development. That development will, I imagine, be carried out either by the Bill before the House, or by some Bill introduced by the Government, of which the principles are identical with this Bill. For, after all, the Allotment Bills are very little more than a bare beginning. No labourer could ever make a fortune on an allotment, and the thriftiest allotment-holder remains a labourer still. I should like to point out, in answer to that cheer just now, that these Bills are but a beginning, it is true, but it is the first beginning of the kind made by either side of the House. The Allotments Bill opens the door, so to speak, of the labourer's prison, but it does not take him any further. It is a small Holdings Bill, following as a natural sequence upon the Allotments Bill, which will give him what he really asks for, and that is an outlet upwards—which he has not at present. It will give him a chance of altering his position for a better one, and changing his *status* as a citizen. If this Bill is passed, he will know that it is possible for him to become well-to-do without leaving his place, and the work that he knows best, and likes best, and does best. He will feel that he has an opportunity, at least, of a fair start, without his present impossible handicap, and he will feel that his future depends like everybody else's, now upon his own industry, wits and character. But, it is not only as a measure of philanthropy, or I would rather call it of

justice, to the agricultural labourers, that a Small Holdings Bill is urged upon the House. Great as may be the advantages to the labourers—as great, and, in the long run, I believe far greater will be the advantages to the country. Nothing can be more striking than the evidence given before the Select Committee, presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham—evidence given by men who represented all sorts and conditions of classes, of economics, of politics, and if I may say so, of prejudices. They took different views: they emphasised different points; they sometimes differed in their history—but whatever their line of thought, or whatever the study of which they spoke as experts, whether social, economic, philanthropic, or political, they agreed in delivering an overwhelming and almost unanimous support in favour of the principles of a Small Holdings measure, such as this before the House. With regard to the economic side, there was, I admit, a certain divergence of opinion, but, at least, it was granted and taken as proved by the Committee, that on small holdings, relatively, a far larger amount of stock and produce of every kind, with the exception of sheep and cereals, is raised than on large, allowing for the proportion between the two. They also accepted, as proved, that the small holders throughout the country were paying a far higher rate of rent for their land; and, while receiving or demanding no abatements or allowances, had paid their rents more punctually, and maintained a far higher standard of relative prosperity than the larger farmers. This unity of opinion, Sir, is, I think, most remarkable when we remember that it practically amounts to a direct reversal of the agricultural doctrines that have been preached and only too highly enforced during the last 40 years. To consolidate holdings, to farm large areas, to deal on a wholesale and not retail principle with agriculture—this has been the precept too much preached and, unfortunately, too much carried out in England during the last two generations. That system has had its trial; and we may take it from the Report of the Select Committee that that system has been found wanting. To go a little further back into the history of the question, when it is argued, as it has been argued, that small holdings are a dangerous experiment, I would ask the House to remember that as far as innovation is concerned, the system of large holdings was the innovating system. Throughout the history of the country you will find the system of small holdings constantly encouraged, and sometimes enforced, by the Statute Law. The growth of the laws of settlement, the growth of capital, and the spread of labour-saving machinery combined to give accidental credit to a new method of holding and tilling the land. That method, while not eminently successful, even from an agricultural point of view, has brought grave, social, and political dangers in its train. It has, without doubt, reduced the chances of employment, crowded our towns to excess, and depopulated the country sides of England. The Bill before the House seeks not so much to give effect to a new principle as to recover and revive what has become a lost art in this country, and to find a remedy for the evil consequences which the loss of that art has brought about. With regard to the actual details and procedure laid down in my hon. Friend's Bill, I do not propose to deal in any way. There are some points on which I had thought of entering a certain amount of criticism, but I gather that my hon. Friend opposite is willing to have them modified. But I would suggest some more centralised authority than there is at present. I am not a very skilful interpreter of a Parliamentary document, but it seems to me that authority is very much divided, and the Lord Chancellor, the Treasury, the Local Government Board, the Local Authority, and the County Courts, all take a hand from time to time in issuing and enforcing the rules and regulations. This, I think, would lead to complications in the working of the Bill. But the broad principle of the Bill is what, I imagine, we are asked to vote for to-day, and that principle is shortly that the Local Authority shall be enabled to borrow money from the Public Loan Commissioners with which to purchase land for the purpose of creating small cultivating ownerships and tenancies of from one to fifty acres; that the purchasers of these holdings shall pay down a certain proportion of the sum in cash and repay the remainder to the Local Authorities either in the form of a perpetual quit-rent as laid down in the Bill, or, as some would perhaps prefer, by gradual instalments in a system similar to that of the Ashbourne Act. I am very loth to differ from my preceptor in these matters—my hon. Friend opposite; but the principle of quit-rent he has laid down, even more strongly than I had expected, and he looks upon it as one of the main principles of the Bill and attaches very great importance to its working. He has produced many strong arguments in its favour; for instance, the argument that it leaves more capital in the hands of the purchaser to get his holding into order, or that it will always have the power of lessening the price of the small holdings whenever they come into the market, thus rendering them more accessible to very small capitalists. But very powerful arguments may also be brought against the plan. If my hon. Friend urges that the prospects of receiving the perpetual rent will be an encouragement to the Local Authority, I cannot but feel that the prospect of perpetually paying it will be very discouraging to the small holders. The restrictions as to sub-letting and mortgaging, eminently just, and reasonable, and wise in themselves, will, at any rate, reduce the attraction of the purchase in the eyes of the purchaser; and if on the top of these restrictions is added the prospect of an endless and undiminishing annual charge, punctually and relentlessly exacted, whatever the rise and fall of prices and values, I fear that many may be deterred from accepting advantages which they would otherwise have eagerly laid hold of. I would support at least what my hon. Friend on this side of the House said, that if possible some modification in the rigidity of this plan should be introduced, by which, at least, it would be possible to lessen by periodical reductions the amount of the permament charge, and in certain cases to leave open some possible door of final redemption, so as to enable the occupier to look forward to the time when he would enjoy all the ordinary independence of the English freeholder. But I believe, Sir, such discussion of the details of the Bill belong rather to the Committee stage than to the Second Reading, and I will not enter further into this question. If the House will bear with me for a few moments longer I will return to one or two points in the general question. The two main arguments generally urged against the system of agriculture by small holdings, are, first, that there is no demand for such holdings; and, secondly, that they would not lead to a remunerative or productive method of cultivation. The first of these objections is refuted by every available record of experience which we possess. Wherever small holdings have been attainable, on terms possible to the poorer classes in the country, whether labourers or small tradesmen, in all such cases they have been eagerly taken up. The demand for such holdings has only been limited because the supply has been infinitesimal, and in some districts non-existent. Many landlords, and I know for instance my hon. Friend the Member for East Norfolk for one, has tried the experiment, and found a great demand, and with very successful results. On a larger scale we have the case of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners which is referred to in the Report of the Select Committee, and which makes an admirable record as to the justification of the system proposed. Beginning on a tentative scale the Commissioners have sold some 10,000 acres to their tenants on a system of deferred payments with 15 per cent paid down. Of these I am informed by the Secretary, 115 holdings are under 100 acres, amounting in all to something like 2,000 acres, of which the total purchase money amounts to £122,000. The Secretary adds, that during the five years the system has been in operation there has been no default, and the instalments have been paid with the greatest regularity. Evidence of similar eagerness to buy may be found throughout the whole Report of the Committee, and such a striking instance of the loss and hardships occasioned by the absence of any facilities at present for furthering such sales is related by Mr. Fyffe that if the House will allow me I will venture to quote it. Mr. Fyffe is a gentleman who has, undoubtedly, great knowledge of the agricultural question. He says—

> "I recently purchased for University College a farm of 28 acres for £500, the rent of which was £30 a year. This is exactly a case where the tenant ought to have purchased. There was no reason why we purchased; it was simply as a good investment. I knew the farm was to be sold, made an offer for it, and it was accepted; but the tenant was really the right person to purchase and was very anxious to do so. Supposing that he could have gone to the Local Authority to buy his farm, he could, although he was unable to raise the £500, have been able to raise the one-fifth, namely, £100. That would have left £400 to be advanced by the Local Authority. That together, reckoning 4 per cent. on his £100, and the money advanced by the Local Authority, would make his yearly interest £20 instead of £30. And, supposing that he ultimately paid off three-fifths, it would be considerably less. At any rate, reckoning it at 4 per cent., no matter what he paid off and what he borrowed, he would be standing at £20 instead of £30. In that case, the tenant becoming holder, would have been immensely advantaged. And if the Local Authority bought it, the result of the whole calculation, if the man had paid off three-fifths, would have been that the Local Authority would have been in receipt of £8 a year perpetual quit-rent, and the man himself would have been benefitted by the transaction."

A few pages later Mr. Fyffe when asked if, in his opinion, legislation to facilitate such purchases by the labouring classes would make a large difference in their point of view, makes the answer—

> "Yes, I think it would make the man a hopeful man, instead of an almost hopeless man."

Such, Sir, is a fair illustration of cases where the Bill would apply with great advantage, and all evidence shows that such cases are not uncommon. The second objection I alluded to, lay in the belief that the production of small holdings was relatively less than that of the large farms. On this point, again, we possess the most undeniable statistical evidence. The Tables handed in to the Committee, and the Agricultural Returns of each year, show that with regard to stock alone, excepting sheep, the numbers raised and maintained on small holdings are immensely greater, relatively, than those which are found on larger farms. With regard to crops, excepting, again, cereals, which, for obvious reasons are more easily raised and with greater success on larger areas, we find the balance of productiveness is more than redressed when we turn to the smaller articles of food. And I would ask the House to remember that these so-called smaller articles of food, become annually more and more important to the country, as the centres of population grow larger. These smaller articles of food are almost entirely neglected on larger holdings. Why, I do not know, unless it is that they are looked upon as beneath the notice of the larger holders, or else that larger interests are at stake, and they have not the time to devote to these articles. The result is that these articles are supplied in an enormous proportion by foreign producers. If the House will tolerate one more allusion to statistics, I will take the figures for the year 1886 to make out my point. The importations in that year were rather below the average than above it in these products. In 1886 you will find the return of the imports, in round numbers, to be: cheese £3,800,000, butter £8,141,000, margarine nearly £3,000,000, lard £1,500,000, pork and bacon £10,000,000, vegetables £1,500,000, and eggs nearly £3,300,000. The total of these imports amounts to something like £30,000,000 sterling. It will be obvious to the House that they are all articles peculiarly suitable to small cultivation, and the returns show that they are brought from countries where small cultivation is largely carried on. Another illustration which I venture to think is not unimportant is, that we learn from the best figures attainable that the home producer receives now for potatoes £15,000,000, while the consumer pays for potatoes £32,000,000. In the case of fruit, the home producer receives only £7,000,000, while the consumer pays £20,000,000. Again, for milk the home producer receives £17,000,000, while the consumer pays £37,000,000. Now, I do not for one moment wish to argue that a Small Holdings Bill will transfer the whole of these balances into the pockets of the English producer, and reduce our imports to a minimum; but I would ask the House to remember that so long as there is no extended system of small cultivation it is impossible that these articles will be produced in anything like sufficient quantity to meet the demands of the population. All evidence shows that if such an extension of small holdings as is proposed to-day were carried out, it would not only increase employment and add to the material prospects of the country districts, but would at the same time at once increase and cheapen a large branch of the food supply of the country. As far as natural conditions of soil and climate go there is no conceivable cause or impediment why these articles I have mentioned should not be produced in England—if not in sufficient quantity, at least, to an enormously greater extent than they are at present. They do not require capital, they do not require machinery, but they do require personal attention and personal labour, in such minute detail as our experience shows is only given by small cultivators. If these economic advantages be added to the social and political ones which have already been alluded to, I feel that a very strong case has been made out in favour of some experimental action in the direction which this Bill recommends. I would gladly enter on some more of the immense number of arguments and illustrations in favour of the same principles which may be drawn from the experience of foreign countries, notably Belgium and Prussia, where co-operation largely supplies the lack of capital; and I would gladly endeavour to meet some of what I believe to be the much exaggerated objections to the scheme, such as the cost of buildings and improvements, if I did not feel that I have perhaps trespassed on the time of the House too long already. I have sought, with very indifferent success, I fear, to show that the principles laid down by my hon. Friend are worthy of a fair and generous trial. Their economic and material advantages have been demonstrated by those who have more knowledge and experience than myself. But I must say that, to myself, perhaps the main attraction of the Bill is the advantages it offers to the agricultural labourers. I believe that something still is due to them. They are not noisy and they do not agitate. The agricultural labourers, so far as I know them, are a very dumb people, and probably the most silent electors in the country. But I want the country to remember that we are under a very definite debt to the agricultural labourers, and I trust that debt will be paid. This House has educated, and perhaps over-educated, their minds [" Oh ! "], and unless you do something for their bodies, you will only have taught them to appreciate their own helplessness and discomfort, and perhaps to seek some self-taught cure for this discomfort. If you give them a chance of rising and prospering, of trying fortune on their own merits, I believe you will change their future, and perhaps the future of the country. I therefore appeal very strongly to the Government to take a friendly view of this Bill, which my hon. Friend opposite has introduced, for I can conceive no more Conservative and, if I may use the term, no more National policy, than to make as easy as possible the acquirement of some portion of the land by those who for many generations have laboured to cultivate it. That is, I imagine, the main principle in this Bill; and, while I sincerely thank the House for the curious indulgence with which it has listened to me, I trust that it will not hesitate to affirm that principle by passing the Second Reading of that Bill.

*(1.52.) Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I feel it a privilege to congratulate the hon. Member who has just sat down on his excellent speech, and on having given utterance to sentiments which most of us on this side of the House heartily approve. I am glad that Lincolnshire has sent a Member to add his protest to ours in favour of further legislation in this beneficent direction. The President of the Board of Agriculture is also a Lincolnshire Member, and I hope he will rise to the position assumed by his colleague in reference to this question, and that when he brings in his Small Holdings Bill it will be framed on the broad and liberal lines suited to a question of national importance. This Debate is somewhat peculiar, because we are debating the

Second Reading of a Bill which is not likely to become law, inasmuch as it is overshadowed by the Government Bill. It would have been more satisfactory had the Government brought in before now a Bill carrying into effect the recommendations of the Select Committee. No Government has for many years been in such a forward position with regard to its business in February as the present Government was, and many hon. Members opposite, as well as hon. Members on this side, must regret that the opportunity has been neglected of bringing in a Small Holdings Bill the Second Reading of which might have been passed by this time. If the Bill does not become law this Session, the fault will rest at the door of the Government. It was thought by the Select Committee with reference to the clause allowing three-fourths value of the land to remain unpaid, that the sum should be reduced by graduated payments, so that in the end only a small nominal rental would be paid to the Local Authority. We believed that to be a better system than creating small freeholders, or another class of small landlords, who might cause the small holdings to be amalgamated by selling to one another. These small holdings must remain under the control of the Local Authorities, so that they may have the power of resumption when they think it necessary for the good of the community. Many feel that a large national acquisition of land would be of benefit to the whole community, and that it might be brought about by carrying out the provisions of this Bill and the recommendations of the Select Committee. The Committee, however, wished to see modifications of the Bill in other directions, and in some respects the Committee were wise in their recommendations. The Select Committee had before them a vast body of evidence in favour of the creation of these small holdings throughout the country. That evidence was of a most impressive character. It showed that where small holdings existed there was practically no pauperism, and that the adoption of some such Bill as that now brought forward would have the effect of arresting the depopulation of the rural districts, and of bringing back to the villages of Merry England, if not their merriness, at all events their prosperity. While the depopulation of the rural districts is going on there is a corresponding increase in town populations, and that is one of the great evils which we have to face. Already two-thirds of our population are grouped together in the big towns, and the best of the agricultural labourers are rapidly leaving the rural districts in order to seek their fortunes elsewhere. That is a direct result of the Education Act of 1870. I do not say that too much education is being given to the agricultural labourer; on the contrary, I wish him to have more; but I do say that the effect of the Act has been to make him discontented with the squalid, miserable surroundings of the life his forefathers led. I want that feeling to lead, not to the migration of the labourers from the rural districts, but to the adoption of legislation that will insure him a home in which decency and morality are possible. I believe that this may be brought about, to a large extent, by the creation of small holdings throughout the country. In France, where there is a system of small holdings, two-thirds of the population live in rural districts, and we should like to see a similar condition of things in this country. Another reason for our advocacy of this change is that it would add considerably to the cultivated area of this country, and consequently increase our powers of food production. In France, Germany, and Belgium, where the small holdings system prevails, the cultivated area of land exceeds 80 per cent. of the total acreage—in one case it is 86 per cent., but in the United Kingdom it is a little below 65 per cent. If much of that waste land were brought into cultivation it would increase our food supply, and at the same time support a larger agricultural population in comparative comfort, as compared with the present condition of the English peasant. I am sorry we have not before us the proposals of the Government, but I hope we shall have some opportunity during this Session of discussing their Bill and placing a suitable Act on the Statute Book. There is throughout the rural districts a great demand for the creation of these small holdings. Even in Wales, where such holdings are proportionately far more numerous than they are in England, the demand continues. In England we have 173,000 holdings of between 5 and 50 acres; in Wales, there are about 30,000, or, on the basis of population, about five to one compared with England. The evidence laid before the Select Committee showed that the demand for these small holdings continued unabated in both England and Wales. This is really the rural labour question; and if the reform is carried, it will relieve the pressure upon the ranks of labour in our large towns. I hope the Minister for Agriculture will meet the demand in a wise and liberal spirit, and that he will reproduce those compulsory clauses which the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division, in the process of his political evolution, has dropped out of his Bill. It is an interesting study to look back upon the Bills produced by that hon. Member during the last seven or eight years. His Bill of 1884 was a rather ambitious project for creating not only plenty of allotment holders, but also yeomen farmers. But now his proposal has dwindled down into a Bill for securing small holdings, and from that he has taken the very kernel of his old Bills, by dropping the compulsory clauses.

*(1.25.) Mr. LLEWELLYN (Somerset, N.): It has been stated that an examination of the details of this measure is out of place in a Second Reading Debate, and should be deferred until the Committee stage; but I think there are certain details which should be dwelt upon now, lest in Committee, when there may not be much time at our disposal, they may escape notice. I am very glad to support the Bill, and wish to give my reasons for doing so in opposition to the different course I pursued a few years ago when a measure of a similar kind was brought before this House. That measure contained what, in my opinion, was a great blot in dealing with this question, namely, the compulsory clauses of purchase, and, in addition, it included terms with respect to the purchase of land to which I then and still object. But the recommendations of the Select Committee referred to, on which I had the honour of serving, have gone a long way to relieve my mind on this point. There are, however, two points in relation to the present Bill which I think the House would do well to consider. First, there is nothing in the Bill as to the area which is to be rated for the provision of the allotments; and, in the next place, I should like to know what is to be the Local Authority that will have to deal with them. It is true that the Bill speaks of the District Councils, but District Councils have not yet been formed, though I hope they soon will be. The Bill also speaks of the County Council as the Local Authority, but, in my opinion, the County Council should not be the authority to deal with the question. Then we come to the consideration whether the future District Council shall be the Local Body, but here we shall be met with the difficulty that the Council will have to go to the parish or another authority before they can come to any decision. I think the difficulty might be met by pursuing much the same course as was followed under the Allotments Acts and by the Sanitary Authority in regard to sanitary matters. Under those Acts Parish Committees were appointed, and the parishes had the carrying out of those schemes for which they had to pay. It is only fair that the parishes or districts to be alone charged in this matter, and which are to be responsible for carrying out the measure, shall have a word to say in the expenditure of their money. It is also a question with me whether the Local Government Board might not with great advantage send out Inspectors under this scheme, as it does in sanitary matters when money is borrowed, and might map out the districts to be benefited. If we are to leave the administration of such an Act, and the provision of funds for the purchase of land, to a District

Council, it may happen, for instance, that we shall have to deal with a union containing 40 or 50 parishes, and the representatives of those parishes may be called upon to provide land for the benefit of two or three individuals only in a remote corner of the union—let us say the fortieth parish. But if the cost is to be charged on the whole union or district, it is very unlikely that in such circumstances we shall get the representatives of the district to agree to expend their money for the benefit of a remote few. Therefore, in my opinion, the line should be drawn as closely as possible round the immediate neighbourhood proposed to be benefited, and the people of that neighbourhood should be called upon to administer the Act and to provide for the necessary funds and expenses. It may be said that a larger area ought to contribute, because it is for the public good; as no doubt it is, as the Government recognise by allowing the borrowing of money on comparatively easy terms. I do not think a district, or union, or larger area should be called on to incur the risk in the case of half a dozen individuals in the remote corner of a parish, because, undoubtedly, the Local Authorities must incur considerable responsibility in these matters, as my own experience goes to prove. It is useless to deny the risk which we know arises in individual cases, because Local Bodies are no wiser than individuals. Local Authorities actuated by local circumstances may make bad bargains where individuals would exercise more care, and it is the duty of these bodies to be just and prudent before being generous, and they have no right to be generous with other people's money. The money is to be borrowed at 3 per cent., which means that land bought for £100 an acre must be let at £3 an acre or a little more, because there are expenses which must be incurred, such as solicitor's fees and so forth. A solicitor dealing with a private individual may possibly, but not probably, have feelings which might mitigate the cost, but nothing of this sort will occur where a solicitor is dealing with a Public Body. All Public Corporations are fair prey to solicitors, and, therefore, we cannot go wrong in putting the cost at the outside margin, or even in adding something to the good. In my own union we have purchased land under the compulsory powers of the Allotments Act, and our experience has been this: the whole machinery for putting the Act in force was set in motion for less than £5, which was a most reasonable charge, considering that it included the clerk's journey to London, which was unnecessarily undertaken. But after this came solicitor's expenses and claims sent in from all directions, including the fees of valuers, arbitrators, and so forth. It is possible the Local Authority, in its anxiety to provide these small holdings, may make bad bargains, and when they do this there is always a temptation to ask a high rent. Nothing can be more fatal than to do this, because bad debts at once begin to accrue. The lessee beggars the land, and ultimately it is thrown on the hands of the Local Authority in an impoverished state. All these risks must be considered and added to the rent of the land. We must also take into account the tenants' side of the question. It would be false kindness to induce members of the agricultural community to become owners of land under false pretences, because it would only lead to failure and disappointment on the part of those we are so anxious to help. In dealing with a Local Authority the tenant is not dealing with an individual; he is dealing with those who, having borrowed money, must pay the interest to the day, and consequently he must pay his rent to the day. Local Authorities must, therefore, be hard landlords bound to exact their pound of flesh to the moment. In saying this I am by no means trying to depreciate or destroy this Bill; far from it. I know from my own experience, as a Member of the Select Committee, that there are many cases in which Local Authorities can advance money and do much good to a very deserving class with every confidence of security, but no one would be a friend of this movement who looked only at one side of the picture and failed to consider anything in the nature of difficulty or danger such as experience may have shown to exist. I am anxious to help forward this measure, because I believe I shall also be helping those who are well deserving of our assistance. I agree with the hon. Member who spoke from below the Gangway, who said that these men do not agitate, that they do not provoke discord, that they do not fill the newspapers with long speeches, nor help in any way to foment agitation. They are none the less deserving our attention and sympathy on this account; still, we must, in legislating upon this question, exercise the greatest care, and take account of every possible difficulty and danger against which we ought to guard. The men with whom we propose to deal are, happily, men who detest anything like debt; and if you induce them to take holdings that will not pay, you will render their lives miserable. It is not the small farmer who figures in the Bankruptcy Court. He does not care to indulge in the luxury of getting heavily into debt, and this fact is one we must take into account. We cannot regard this or any other Bill as a panacea for all agricultural ills we know of, and we do not expect it to make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. Something has been said about small owners being able to pay where the large owners have failed. I think it would be a fallacy to induce people to think so. I do not believe that where capital has been wisely expended in combination with great agricultural skill and energy, and the man of capital and knowledge has failed, the man without capital, whatever energy he may possess, is likely to achieve success. Doubtless there are places where small holdings are more likely to pay than large holdings. Only yesterday I saw a farm which I believe is the property of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and out of which I believe there will be no difficulty in securing 300 acres for small holdings. I shall keep my eye on that, because, although it has been neglected, and is in bad cultivation, I believe it is land which, let as small holdings, might be made to pay. With regard to the question of the size of these holdings, the Committee has, I think, wisely recommended that the rateable value should be considered before the acreage of the land. I think any reasonable man will agree with that, because, undoubtedly, five, seven, or ten acres of market garden land is quite as much as one man can attend to; whilst in some districts the mountain lands of 200 or 300 acres we have heard of would not give the holder more employment than a small market plot. As to the terms of purchase, I have no doubt that the hon. Member who has introduced this Bill, as well as a former Bill, lost a great amount of support by requiring one-fourth of the value to be paid down, and allowing three-fourths to remain. I can hardly think that any man can be brought to believe that he really owns a small holding, for which he has only paid one-quarter of the value. There is, undoubtedly, something to be said on the other side of the question. It is said that the land ought to be purchaseable outright. I once thought so too, but I have changed my mind; I have found that there is another side of the question. If a man wishes to be a freeholder, he can go into the open market and buy; and if he is able to do this, why should he put the Local Authority to the expense of purchasing for him? No doubt, when the man has rented the land for a number of years, and finds he can purchase it, there ought to be power given to the Local Authority to sell it out and out; but why, I ask, should the Local Authority be called upon for the expense? The man who wants to purchase outright ought to pay some of the legal expenses. Should the Local Authority decide to sell to a tenant his holding and afterwards be applied to by others for land, the Local Authority would, on behalf of these new applicants, have to go through the same risks and trouble to procure afresh. Therefore, with certain exceptions, I would not allow the Local Authority to sell to tenants whenever they applied to buy. I would not make it absolutely impossible for the Local Authority to sell outright; but when a man has made use of the Local Authority to purchase for him, I would call on him to pay some of the expense of the conveyance. A good deal has been said about the absence of a compulsory clause. In my opinion, the hon. Member for Bordesley has done well to omit compulsion, because to run the risk of compulsory purchase may in many cases prove an extremely expensive process. I think the hon. Member has gained the support and assistance of many hon. Members by declining to introduce the compulsory principle. Doubtless there is difficulty in dealing with the matter as the law now stands. The hon. Member for Bordesley has drawn a vivid picture of the delight to be obtained by the acquisition of small holdings, and the success he hopes will attend this proposal. I have pointed out some of the difficulties and dangers that must be considered in discussing this measure. I have urged that the Local Authority must be protected while, at the same time, we endeavour to benefit the agricultural community. I have shown that if you induce tenants to rent land on terms that will not pay you will defeat the object that you have in view. Having done this, I can only express a hope that the Government may see their way to allowing the Second Reading of this Bill. I cannot, of course, say what the hon. Member for Bordesley may do then; but it affords the greatest possible satisfaction to many who sit on this side of the House to know that the Government are about to deal with the question. I believe that some such measure as this, if wisely administered, will enable many a man to rise to a position of independence and usefulness; and, at the same time, if you are able to introduce small holdings into many parts of the country, you will not only benefit the small holding class, but will do much towards establishing in this country a large number of men who, by being enabled to invest their money in the land itself, will thus realise the responsibilities of the ownership of property to their own and the national good.

(2.50.) MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): The hon. Member who has just sat down made one observation with which I am inclined to agree, and another with which I presume to take issue. He has stated that the principle of small holdings will never make two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. I join issue with that statement, and would remind him that Lord Derby once said, "The productive capacity of the land of England might well be doubled."

*MR LLEWELLYN: I beg pardon; what I wanted to point out was that men ought not to be induced to take up small holdings without capital, thinking they can make them pay, where, with ample capital, large farmers have failed.

MR. H. GARDNER: If I have misunderstood the hon. Member I apologise to him, but I must say that in my opinion the principle of small holdings is more likely to make six blades of grass grow where only one grew before. I have only intervened in this Debate because I not only take the greatest interest in this question, but I also represent a constituency, the population of which is mostly rural, and whose electorate consists mainly of agricultural labourers, who are a part of the community which both sides of the House honestly desire to assist by rendering their lives more happy and comfortable. The question of how to assist the rural population to raise themselves without violating economical conditions, how to raise the standard of comfort in the rural districts to something like the extent attained by those who reside in the towns, how to prevent the younger portion of the population migrating from the villages into our already over-crowded cities, and how to take away from this country the shame which rests upon us, that so many of our fellow citizens, after a long life of labour and privation as agricultural labourers, finally, end their days as paupers—this is a problem which deserves and ought to receive the serious attention of this House. I am convinced that one of the most important factors in the solution of this problem in regard to our rural population is the question of small holdings. The House has listened to several interesting speeches this afternoon and notably to the maiden speech made by the hon. Member for the Stamford Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Cust), a speech on which I venture, and in no conventional sense, to offer my congratulations to the hon. Gentleman. But in that speech, as in many others from the opposite side of the House, I think I can detect the anticipation of a General Election, and the whiff of the hustings. I think these things are discernible, not only in their advocacy of small holdings—an advocacy for which a Conservative Party has not hitherto been famous—but also in the very candid criticisms offered, especially by the hon. Member for the Stamford Division, of the Allotments Bill already passed by Her Majesty's Government. We have also had from the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division a most interesting speech, which I have followed with the greatest attention; and here I may say that I am very glad that the present measure has been introduced by one who has devoted so much of his time to the improvement of the labourers' position, and to whom the agricultural community owe so much. We have listened to the hon. Member in days past with great attention, and now that he has become an important factor in the Imperial policy of the realm, we are delighted to see him once more championing a Small Holdings Bill. Not that I am altogether satisfied with this measure, because I am one of those who are sorry to see the blessed word "compulsion" absent from his measure on this occasion. I hope, however, that the hon. Gentleman will use the influence which he undoubtedly possesses, and bring it to bear with all the force he can on the Party with which he acts, so that we may ere long have before us some real Small Holdings Bill, and not be put off with a sham measure as we have been with a sham Allotments Act. What we want to know now is, what is the opinion of the Government on this subject, and for this reason I welcome the presence of the President of the Board of Agriculture, because he is one of the most important factors in the settlement of this question. It is necessary, therefore, to know what are the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman on this Bill. In 1882, when the hon. Member for Bordesley first introduced a Resolution on this subject, declaring that—

> "Provision should be made by Parliament to facilitate the acquirement by agricultural labourers, tenant farmers, and others of proprietorial rights in agricultural land,"

the right hon. Gentleman, in reply to my hon. Friend, did not scruple to say, after delivering a speech on the subject—the President of the Board of Agriculture arrived at this conclusion—that the proposition was "radically unsound, as well as economically mischievous." Not only did he arrive at this conclusion, but the whole of his speech went to prove that the principle of small holdings was unproductive of good. We are to have a small Holdings Bill brought in by the present Government, and it will be exceedingly interesting to hear from the right hon. Gentleman what his opinions are on this subject at the present day. If he goes to a Division I shall vote with the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division, but at the same time I deeply regret he has not included in his Bill that blessed word "compulsion." But half a loaf is better than no bread. The agricultural labourers are perhaps the hardest worked people in the country and, at the same time, the least able to make provision for old age. I shall gladly vote for this or any other Bill which will in any way benefit those who form the main portion of my constituents.

*(3.3.) THE MARQUESS OF GRANBY (Leicestershire, Melton): I cannot help regretting that the hon. Gentleman (Mr. H. Gardner) has made the speech to which we have just listened, because it appears to me that that speech introduces into the Debate a polemical and Party feeling which cannot assist the object of the Bill—an object which I firmly believe is held in favour by every section of the House. On the whole I frankly admit I am entirely in accord with the Bill of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division, and shall willingly vote for its Second Reading; but I think I would be unwise if I were to vote for the measure without criticising some of its provisions, with which I do not entirely agree. In a part of the constituency, which I have the honour to represent, there has been for many

years—before any measure of this kind was introduced—a strong desire for the acquisition of allotments and small holdings, and, therefore, I cannot be accused of supporting a measure which has not been to some extent considered in the county in which I have the pleasure to reside and the honour to represent. But there are one or two points to which I think it right to direct the attention of the House. Clause 42 of the Bill provides that any Local Authority may, for the purposes of the Act, purchase, sell, hire, or exchange any land, whether situated within or without their district. It seems to me there are two objections to this clause. In the first place, a Local Authority in Wiltshire may purchase land in Leicestershire and place upon that land Wiltshire men who are totally unacquainted with the class of soil and the general conditions of agriculture in Leicestershire. Again, it appears to me, that the clause, taken in conjunction with the 4th clause, offers an inducement to a Local Authority to step outside the duties of a Local Authority and embark upon a large system of land investment. To allow a Local Authority to do this without more safeguards than are provided by the Bill I think would be improper. Furthermore, I do not think that in Clause 66 sufficient care has been taken with regard to the interests of the main body of ratepayers in the district concerned. I hope that at a later stage there will be some modification of the clause. To the main principles of the Bill I give my hearty assent, but I feel that in Committee I and others on the Government side of the House will have to ask the hon. Member (Mr. Jesse Collings) not to be in any way dismayed if we give some small opposition to certain clauses of the measure.

*(3.13.) MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I desire to say a very few words upon this Bill in regard to which, such pleasing unanimity has been shown from every quarter of the House. It is true, a few words of criticism have fallen from the noble Lord (the Marquess of Granby), but those criticism relate to a point which ought properly to be dealt with in Committee. Again, the hon. Member for Somerset uttered, some notes of warning in regard to the consequences, which he thinks, may follow upon the adoption of such a policy as this; but on this side of the House the only notes of criticism uttered have been those of the hon. Member for the Saffron Walden Division and the hon. Member for the Ilkeston Division, who pointed with regret to the absence from the present measure of the compulsion clauses, that were to be found in the previous Bills. Taken as a whole, the Debate has been singularly unanimous in favour of the measure, showing that all are agreed, or nearly so, that the intervention of the Local Authority is necessary in certain cases for the purpose of creating small holdings. It would be a serious thing to interfere with the course of economic law, and at the same time to bring about the intervention of the Local Authority in cases of this kind, unless it can be proved to demonstration that the intervention of the Local Authority in this way will not only be to the advantage of the individual but also to that of the community at large. That demonstration has now been afforded in a most conclusive manner by the Report of the Small Holdings Committee. But there are one or two prejudices which still require to be removed. The hon. Member for Somerset spoke of the great indebtedness of the present proprietors abroad as an argument against the system of peasant proprietary.

*MR. LLEWELLYN: I never mentioned peasant proprietors abroad.

*MR. F. S. STEVENSON: I am sorry if I misunderstood the hon. Member. If he did not refer to peasant proprietors abroad he referred to the difficulties which may arise owing to indebtedness, and he pointed to the analogy of similar instances abroad. The delusion as to indebtedness of peasant proprietors abroad may be disproved by reference to the recent Return issued on the subject of peasant proprietary abroad. In reference to Denmark, it is shown that the amount of indebtedness has been during the last 100 years almost a constant quantity amounting to about 43 per cent. of the total value of the holdings. But what is more significant still, is that indebtedness has increased and decreased in proportion to the value of the land. That in itself is sufficient corroboration of the position that indebtedness of peasant proprietors is not in itself an argument against the system. If hon. Members look at the whole Return they will find that the condition of the small proprietors abroad is much more satisfactory than they have been led to believe, and that the amount of their savings has been such as to leave no doubt on the point. That is proved by the extent to which small proprietors in France hold portions of the National Debt, the extent to which they subscribed to the indemnity paid to Germany after the war, and the extent to to which they invest, not only in sound undertakings, but in such rotten speculations as the Panama Canal. Besides, they are continually adding acre to acre, and they cultivate the land with profit to themselves and security to their families. But, greatly as I am in favour of the principle of the Bill in consequence of the effect I believe it will have in redressing artificially a state of things which has been artificially brought about, I think that the best form of ownership will not be that which this Bill will create, but that form in which a man will be able to do what he likes with his own, that form which will encourage him to devote to the cultivation of the land all the energies and capital with which he is endowed. The system I would prefer may be established if the land were made more saleable than at present, and if the restrictions which now hamper the passing of it from hand to hand were removed. That is the direction in which the real solution of the land question is to be found, and that is the direction in which we ought to turn our efforts.

*(3.20.) COLONEL EYRE (Lincolnshire, Gainsborough): I shall support the Second Reading of the Bill, not only because I have for many years been in favour of encouraging the creation of small holdings, but also because I have received evidence from a part of the Division I have the honour to represent of the success of small holdings. Perhaps there is no constituency in which there are so many small holdings as in mine. In the Isle of Axholme there have been small holdings and allotments from time immemorial. Up to 12 years ago, before the agricultural depression set in, those small holdings and allotments were an unqualified success. There are holdings there of from an acre to 40 and 50 acres, and previous to the agricultural depression the owners of them flourished in an unexampled manner. Since the depression set in there has undoubtedly been a diminution in prosperity, but still I am bound to say that sufficient industrious owners and small farmers are able to pull through in these bad times as to make me consider that any scheme based on sound political economy which will encourage an increase of small holdings, even in bad times, may be a success. It is impossible to lay down a hard and fast rule as to where small holdings will or will not succeed. Success is dependent upon a great many circumstances: much depends upon the locality, and upon the proximity to a large town, where a market can be found for the produce. Then, again, there is the quality of the land to be taken into consideration. One acre of some land will produce as much as 20 or 30 acres of another class of land. Again, there is the last and perhaps most important fact in connection with the question and that is, much depends on the industry of the occupier; and while I wish success to the Bill I fail to see what there is in the Bill to guard against any man getting hold of some land, running it to his own advantage for a few years and then throwing it up, injuring not only the ratepayers, who have purchased the land, but himself in the bargain. In my Division there is no difficulty in obtaining land for allotments and, therefore, perhaps this Bill will not apply very much there. This morning I received a letter from a land agent in the Division, in which the writer says—

"I have never known any difficulty in meeting the wants of applicants, either for allotments or small holdings, and, as a rule, the land is

> let at reasonable rents. These, of course, havs come down very much during the last ten years, say from 25 to 50 per cent."

The value of land purchased under this Bill may fall at some future time 25 or 30 per cent., and I fail to see how the loss will affect anybody but the ratepayers. Therefore, I quite agree with the remarks of the hon. Member for Somerset that we ought to be very careful in dealing with public money, especially with money which is borrowed on the rates which are now so heavily mortgaged. I disagree with the hon. Member for the Stamford Division in his deprecatory remarks concerning large farms. What are wanted in England are large as well as small farms. Agriculture has been a greater success in this country than in any other country in the world. We grow more corn per acre than any other country, we produce the finest flocks of sheep, the finest herds of cattle, and the finest breeds of horses the world can produce. All our colonies are stocked with our produce—indeed, there is not a single part of the world in which the result of English agriculture is not apparent. It is necessary, therefore, to be careful how we interfere with what has been so successful up to the present time. There is no doubt that if the country were divided into small holdings it would be impossible to produce the fine flocks and herds we produce now. I support this Bill, as I shall support every Bill that will in some measure or other tend to wed the agricultural labourer closer to the soil. I am conscious of the difficulties farmers experience in obtaining labour, especially at harvest time. It stands to reason that no able-bodied young labourer of 18 or 20 will remain in an agricultural district, earning 12s., 13s., 14s., or 15s. a week, when he can earn better wages in town. It is because I believe it will tend to wed the labourer closer to the soil that I support the Bill. It was for a like reason I supported the Bill the hon. Member for East Norfolk introduced last year for improving the dwellings of the rural labourers, and also for adding a piece of land to every house built in the future—a Bill which, I extremely regret, was blocked by hon. Members sitting on the Liberal Benches.

(3.27.) MR. R. T. REID (Dumfries, &c.): I wish to congratulate the hon. Member for Bordesley upon the success that his long and unremitting labours have attained. It is eight or nine years since my hon. Friend first brought this matter before the House, and for four or five years afterwards not only were his projects received with disfavour, but I think he himself encountered a good deal of opposition. On the present occasion he has the satisfaction of hearing from the other side of the House what, I have not the least doubt, is perfectly sincere appreciation of his Bill. I do not believe that it has been brought forward to serve any electioneering purpose. Hon. Gentlemen on both sides are beginning to feel the extreme importance of such measures in the interest of the country. Everybody agrees that the Bill ought to be read a second time, and I hope my hon. Friend will be able to pass it, with such Amendments as may be necessary, in the course of the Session; or that the Government will fulfil the pledge given at the beginning of the Session and pass some Small Holdings Bill equivalent to this. I could give instances of very successful efforts on the part of small holders in improving land which large occupiers would not look at. I could instance a place about two miles from Lochmaben where peat land has been converted into a smiling pasture. Departing from this subject, I attach more importance to these small plots of four or five acres than to 30 or 40 or 50 acres being taken up. Two hon. Members opposite seemed to be afraid that the Local Authority might be extravagant, or incur some loss by reason of the operations of this Bill. One hon. Member dwelt particularly on this. But if we cannot trust the Local Authorities for the purpose of carrying out reforms of this kind, whom can we trust? There is in truth no alternative. We must either do what was done by the Allotments Bill, when the Government left it to the Local Authority, with an injunction that they should not enter on the enterprise unless they thought they could do so without risk of loss, or else we must wash our hands of the whole affair. If I could complain at all of my hon. Friend I should complain of him because he has abandoned the compulsory clause. I do not pretend to penetrate into the secrets of his heart, but if I did so I think I should find that he has still a sneaking fondness for that word "compulsion," and that it is only the wish to propitiate those who were not the first to advocate this cause that has induced him to abandon the principle. But I live in hopes that the hon. Member may himself take part in adding to future legislation to remove the defect which I am afraid is to be found in the Bill. There is no use in many parts of the country, talking about this Bill as a voluntary measure. For my own part, I do not question the fact that in many parts of the country there is land which could be obtained by the Local Authorities without compulsion, but it should be remembered that in other parts of the country this is not the case. Then we must bear in mind that to be successful, a scheme of this kind must apply to the population residing within a certain area. You cannot deport people 10 or 20 miles off with any prospect of success. Some hon. Members have complained of the tenure provided by this Bill, and have urged that a man ought to be enabled to buy the freehold out and out. But men who can afford to buy land out and out will not largely avail themselves of the facilities provided by this Bill. Moreover, we are using the public funds, and, therefore, we must see that the Exchequer and the Local Authority get some firm hold upon the transaction. The Local Authority will get an immense advantage in this way. We know that violent attacks have been made for a good many years on that system by which landowners obtain what is called "the unearned increment" of their land. I refrain from expressing my opinion upon that subject, but this Bill will have a most beneficial effect in a most honest way. When a Local Authority has bought land and has let it out upon a tenure which is practically a perpetual lease, it will be found that if that land becomes valuable for some purpose other than its cultivation as a small holding, the Local Authority will be able, on giving full compensation —namely, its value as a small holding—to expropriate the landlord and to get the benefit of the unearned increment. While I can understand it being said that it would be unfair to come down on the present landowner and take him by the throat and say, "You must give up the unearned increment," to any future landlord it cannot be unfair; if a man chooses to initiate a transaction to say to him that he is to have nothing more than the value of the land as agricultural land. The hon. Member for the Bordesley Division has always insisted upon this, and though I do not pretend that the method adopted by my hon. Friend is an ambitious way of dealing with a difficult and complicated subject, yet it is certainly a step in the right direction. I believe we all wish the Local Authority to have the unearned increment of the land, and I think that will be done by this Bill to a certain extent. One hon. Gentleman complained that there are in the Bill undue restrictions against alienation, and has observed that people would like to have land free. No doubt they would; but I wish to point out that if the State is to incur the expense and risk of constructing a system of small holdings it will never do to allow these small holdings to be cut up, subdivided, and reduced to quite diminutive proportions, and deprived of the character with which it is intended to invest them. If the House appreciates that point, it follows that we must allow only three methods of alienation—namely, sale of the entire holding, mortgage of the entire holding, and devise by will of the entire holding. These are the only restrictions on alienation contained in the Bill. I think it will be seen that they follow of necessity from the tenure I have referred to, and which appears to me to be the most convenient tenure in the interest of the community. Nor am I afraid that the tenants would be deterred by these considerations from taking these small holdings. Those who can afford the luxury, no doubt, will prefer to have the freehold all to themselves; but those who cannot will find that they have that which is the chief incentive to industry, namely, an assurance that if they put labour into the land, they will reap reward—that where they have sown there also they will reap. The last point I desire to refer to is this: Some hon. Gentlemen have spoken in too sanguine a tone as to the effects of this Bill. Nobody can attach more importance to it than I do; but everybody knows it must work by degrees. Until District Councils are established it will be difficult to carry out effectively the provisions of this Bill; but I am, of course, aware that the Government have promised to introduce a Bill for the creation of District Councils. While I attach great importance to this measure, I do not think it will be a panacea for all evils; but I am sure it will be a step in the right direction, because it upsets the old-fashioned idea about land. Besides, the discussion on the Bill will be most useful, because it has exhibited a spirit pervading the whole House that these are amongst the questions which deserve our most careful attention.

*(3.52.) SIR E. BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): I wish to tender my most hearty congratulations to the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division that after so many years' working in regard to this subject he has at last obtained an opportunity of securing a full consideration of the important question of small holdings. In my opinion no Member of the House, or any man out of the House, has done so much to secure rural labourers small holdings and allotments as the hon. Gentleman. The hon. Member for Saffron Walden has expressed a hope that this will not be a sham measure. Well, if the Bill is passed, or a Government Bill, and as much success attends them as has attended the Allotments Act, it will not be a sham measure. I served on the Select Committee, and was convinced most completely by what I heard there as to the importance of the creation of small holdings. But independently of that Committee my experience in the Eastern Counties proves to me that there is a demand for small holdings, and that in many districts there are no means of getting them. I do not approve of the remarks of the hon. Member for the Stamford Division in regard to large farms. As a Norfolk man I contend that large farms in that county, and in the Eastern Counties generally, have done more towards the food supply of the country than any other class of farms. During the last twelve years tenants of large farms have laboured under great difficulty, and it is a marvel to me they have struggled through as well as they have. In places near railway stations there has sprung up a decided demand for small holdings, and the extension of fruit culture, market gardens, and other holdings of that sort has increased the demand to a great extent. As regards fruit culture, I consider that it is only in its infancy, and that it has got a very great future before it. I know numbers of men who have had small gardens or allotments, and have gradually worked their way up until they are now holding farms of 100 and 200 acres. Those men have worked in their holdings in a most astonishing way. They have saved money, and they are now in a position to make good provision for their families. The competition for allotments and small holdings is keen, not only among labourers, but among small tradesmen and artisans. Having a farm of about 200 acres thrown upon my hands, I determined to let it in small holdings, and there was a scramble of applicants. I do not anticipate that the question of erecting buildings will cause any difficulty, and I have always found a willingness on the part of the tenants to erect such if only they have security for the outlay, and compensation if they leave the land. There is ample evidence that these small holdings are well farmed. Rents are paid regularly. demands for reductions being rare. There are in the Eastern Counties two distinct demands, a demand to hire land and a demand for freehold land. These small farms are well and

profitably cultivated, and if they are encouraged I haye no doubt that the produce coming from them will go far to reduce the food imports from abroad. The measure will be welcomed from all sides, and I only hope the Government proposal will hold out an alternative to the present Bill enabling small cultivators to become on easy terms absolute freeholders. Any proposal to put increased taxation on the land must not be entertained, for it would at once be the death of any scheme to create small owners. I beg to support the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill.

*(3.50.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): We have had a most interesting discussion, and I have listened with great attention to all that has been said. The discussion has been conducted with a remarkable absence of Party spirit, and it is evidently desired on all sides to arrive at a satisfactory solution of a difficult and complicated question. I am unable to agree with everything that has been said in the course of the Debate. My hon. Friend the Member for Lincolnshire (Mr. Cust) has spoken as though the time has come when the system of large farming in England should be discontinued. It is precisely on the large farms that during many years there has been the greatest expenditure in capital, science, and skill; and when the time of great depression arrived it was consequently on this class of farms that the greatest losses naturally fell. That great expenditure was followed by a long series of unpropitious seasons, the like of which no man living can remember, and after by a fall in prices, which I acknowledge shook the system to its very foundations.

*MR. CUST: As the right hon. Gentleman is the fourth person who has attributed to me an attack on large farms, I may be allowed a word of explanation. I did not accuse the large farms of being the cause of the agricultural depression. I merely declared that the tendency has been to throw English agriculture into the hands of the large farmers, to the exclusion of small farming. I expressed regret at this, and my intention was to emphasise my strong conviction that a system which would allow of the existence side by side of all classes of farming would be better.

*MR. CHAPLIN: I am very glad to hear the explanation of my hon. Friend. I listened with great attention to his speech, and I certainly formed the opinion that he condemned with some severity the system of large farms. I am very glad to learn that such is not altogether the case. I know that system is frequently attacked in this country from various quarters, and I wish to remind the House that, before the period of depression, it was under the system of large farming that the country arrived at a pitch of agricultural prosperity such as has never been approached by any other country in the world. Even now, whether with regard to the character of the stock produced, or the amount of produce extracted from the land, this country stands far ahead of any other country in the world. The hon. Member for the Saffron Walden Division (Mr. Gardner) has referred to words used by me in 1882, which were hostile to the principle of this Bill. Well, 1882 was a long time ago. I have not referred, so far as I know, to the speech I made on that occasion since then; but I have no doubt that the hon. Member is correct in the views which he says that I expressed. But what were the circumstances of the time? The country had just passed through a period of unexampled depression—depression of such severity that the House of Commons appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the condition of agriculture. I served on the Commission, and in the course of its inquiries there certainly were received most unfavourable and discouraging Reports as to the condition of the small freeholders, and especially of those freeholders who exist in such numbers in Lincolnshire. I certainly at that time quoted the opinion of Mr. Druce, who is well known as a highly qualified expert in agricultural matters. Mr. Druce is a farmer himself, and descended from a farming family. He is a gentleman of cultivation and wide experience, and he had at that time exceptional opportunities for forming an opinion on the subject. He was one of the Sub-Commissioners, and Lincolnshire was included in the district in which he conducted his examination. He saw the two systems at work side by side, and the Reports sent by him and other Sub-Commissioners were most unfavourable to the small freeholders. I know from my own experience that at the time those Reports were accurate, and I was then opposed to the views put forward in this Bill. But we are none of us infallible. Since then a Select Committee has been appointed, which has made further inquiries, and I have also had Reports myself, respecting the condition of the freeholders. Both from the Report of the Select Committee, and from the information which I have obtained myself, it appears, I am glad to say, there has been an amelioration in the condition of the freeholders, and I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing now to prevent the proposed experiment from being made. Turning to the Bill of the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division, I must take notice of one important change in it, namely, the elimination of the principle of taking land by compulsion for small holdings. Several hon. Members have astonished me by objecting to this elimination. The hon. Member for the Ilkeston Division described compulsion as the very kernel of the Bill. The same complaint is made by the hon. Member for the Saffron Walden Division (Mr. Herbert Gardner), who seems to find comfort in the blessed word "compulsion." The modern Radical, I observe, always professes to love liberty; and yet there is nothing in the world he adores so much as the principle of compulsion. It is the more remarkable in this case, because this subject has been carefully examined by the Select Committee, and in the Report of that Committee will be found very excellent reasons against the adoption of the principle of compulsion. The Report says this—

> "Your Committee have given full consideration to the arguments on both sides, and have resolved not to recommend compulsory power. They feel that any scheme adopted now must necessarily be of a tentative character, and they are convinced that there is enough land obtainable by voluntary agreement to ensure a fair trial of the experiment."

I have always heard myself that that is the case. There is ample land in the market already for the purpose of providing any number of small holdings if either the Local Authorities or others are willing to buy it. I am very glad this principle has gone out of the Bill, for it removes one of the most serious objections which has prevented me in the past, and would have prevented me in the present, from giving my support to the Second Reading of the Bill. I take the principle of the Bill to be this: that the Local Authority shall have power under certain restrictions to acquire land by the aid of the State for the purpose of facilitating the creation of a class of cultivating owners. That is an object in which I believe all of us concur, that is an object which, at all events, Her Majesty's Government heartily approve, and that being the principle of the Bill as I understand it, the Government have no hesitation in giving support to the Second Reading of the measure. In the course of the Debate I have noticed various objections taken to points of detail, and I propose to express the views of the Government with regard to some of them. The first I will notice is that the Local Authority in selling a small holding very naturally are to require that a quarter of the purchase money must be paid at the time of the completion of the sale, and that I think is a salient and necessary provision. But instead of requiring that the remainder of the purchase money shall be paid in a certain number of years, the Bill insists that part of the purchase money shall remain a debt upon the holding for ever. Further than this, and this, in my opinion, is a still more serious objection, the Bill empowers the Local Authority, by giving 12 months' notice, at any time to repurchase the holding, not only for any purpose of general public utility, but also if the Local Authority has reason to believe that the land may be used more profitably for any purpose in the future than as a small holding.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: For public utility.

*MR. CHAPLIN: Well, Sir, for purposes of public utility any estate, of course, whether it be a large or whether it be a small one, must remain liable to the laws under which land may be taken now by compulsion for purposes of public advantage; but beyond this I know of no sufficient reason for this exceptional power in this case. What I am afraid of is this: that there will be nothing more likely to deter an intending purchaser of a small holding than these two conditions. By the first of which the land is never to be free from debt and three-quarters of the purchase money will remain a charge for ever; and by the second of which the Local Authority will have the power at almost any time to resume possession of the holding. What Englishmen like, what they cherish above all things, would be that which no one in the world can take away from them against their will, and of which nothing short of an Act of Parliament can deprive them. One of the chief inducements to purchase a small holding will be the knowledge that they have bought a property. I am quite satisfied myself that the object of Parliament in dealing with this question, if we are to deal with it at all, ought to be the endeavour to create a race of owners—I would say of trying to reproduce, if possible, that old race of yeomen which has almost ceased to exist—which should be dependent neither on a Local Authority, nor on a landlord, nor, indeed, on anybody else in the world but themselves. Now, the hon. Member for the Bordesley Division told us that his object in this was to guard against the evils of subdivision, of sub-letting, of mortgages, and various other evils prevalent on the Continent and in this country, also, at the present time in the case of small landholders. My answer is, that I believe that if the system which he advocates is a sound one, it will guard itself against these evils; but if, on the other hand, it is unsound, neither the precautions he desires to insert nor any other precautions will preserve it from the evils he anticipates, and of which he appears to entertain some misgiving already. I notice also that the Bill confers on the Local Authority very considerable powers of letting land and of making improvements on the land when they have purchased it; and this, I think, is a question upon which some considerable doubts might be raised, as to whether the Local Authority is the body best fitted for either of these purposes. Personally, I am inclined to think it would be better if both of them were avoided. Excellent reasons against the letting of land by a Local Authority are given in the Report of the Committee. Speaking of letting as an alternative to selling, they say it is preferable in the interest of the purchaser to reduce the risk to a minimum; that he should be required to furnish a quarter of the purchase money, and that at once creates a security for subsequent payments; but, on the other hand, in allowing the Local Authority to let and take all the vicissitudes of the landlord class, it is hardly possible that they should avoid losses incident to the business. In bad seasons they would be subject to pressure for reductions of rent; and if in the interest of ratepayers they sternly exacted the fixed rent at all times, certainly they would become most unpopular landlords, and their action would be unfavourably contrasted with the action general among private landlords. I do not wish to commit myself to any very hostile opinion upon the point; but I submit this question to the House as one that eminently deserves attention.

MR. JESSE COLLINGS: Will the right hon. Gentleman allow me to remind him that the proposal in the Bill applies to letting up to 10 acres, and the remarks of the Committee apply to larger holdings?

*MR. CHAPLIN: I am aware that it is limited to 10 acres under the Bill. But, though I do not wish to take a hostile attitude on this point, I incline to the opinion that it will be better to avoid the letting of land by the Local Authority so far as it may be possible to do so. Now, as to the making of improvements by the Local Authority, if that power should be largely availed of, one of two things would almost certainly happen—the cost of improvements would be added to the purchase money, and would either make the price of the land prohibitive to the purchaser; or, on the other hand, the burden of making the improvements would fall upon the rates; and this leads me to another point in connection with the Bill, to which I desire to draw attention. The Bill, as it is drawn, empowers a Local Authority to buy land anywhere, and sell to any person the Local Authority thinks fit. In fact, there is nothing under the Bill, for instance, to prevent the Corporation of Birmingham buying land in Wiltshire or Lincolnshire, and selling it to an artisan in Manchester. Now, I venture to think that the power of purchase ought to be limited to the district within which the Local Authority exercises jurisdiction, or to the adjoining district. I say the neighbouring district, because it is possible that most desirable land for the purpose might be intersected by the boundary of the district. Certainly I think the power of purchase ought to be limited to this extent, and the power of sale to residents within their own district. If this were done, one of the main difficulties in connection with this question would be removed, and it is this. In spite of what has been said by my hon. Friend (Sir E. Birkbeck), I do regard the provision of buildings as one of the chief difficulties in connection with the question of small holdings, but in the way I have suggested this difficulty would, to some extent be met. If the power of sale were limited to persons resident within the district, it is to be presumed that they would already have a house to live in, and possibly some buildings of their own; and where that is the case I see no reason why a Bill of this description, providing people of this class with small holdings, should not work perfectly well. The Bill contains many other provisions it is unnecessary for me to deal with now. It provides for a system of land registry, undoubtedly a very important question, but whether it is a subject to be appropriately dealt with in a Bill for providing small holdings is somewhat open to question. Then, again, the Local Authority may advance money to a tenant for the purpose of purchasing his holding from his landlord, provided the holding does not exceed 50 acres in extent. I apprehend the principle of this is somewhat in the nature of an extension of the Ashbourne Act to England; and if the hon. Member thinks that Parliament will agree to the proposal, and Parliament does agree to it, I certainly shall offer no opposition, always within certain restrictions which, of course, would have to be laid down. But I think, perhaps, I have said enough upon the details of the measure, and I pass to some more general observations in relation to the subject. I wish to see an increase, if possible a large increase, of the number of small landowners. Their disappearance—for in the past they existed in far greater numbers than they do now—was due undoubtedly to economic causes, and whether it is possible by legislation or by any other means to prevail against these causes remains to be proved. At all events, I am of opinion that it is an experiment which can be made, and should be made. But I do wish to say a word of warning on this question to those gentlemen in the House and outside who seem to think it the easiest thing in the world merely by the passing of an Act of Parliament to create an immense addition to the small holders of land in the country. It is nothing of the kind; and those who hold that opinion are doomed to disappointment. Agriculture, under present circumstances, is not particularly encouraging, and of late it has rarely been a profitable pursuit. With present prices the Returns are small, while on the other hand the outlay is as heavy, or heavier than it has ever been before. If small holders in this country are to be prosperous there are three conditions which I am satisfied must be fulfilled. In the first place, the land must be good land; it must be of superior quality. I am certain there is no greater mistake in the world than to put a small holder upon poor land, and ask him to get a living out of it. His best exertions will not secure one-half the return from poor land that good land would yield. In the second place, the price of the land must not be excessive. ["Hear, hear!"] Yes, it is easy to cheer that; but hon.

Gentlemen must remember that good land suitable for this purpose even in these days is worth 30s. or 40s. an acre to let, and that means, at 30 years' purchase, £60 an acre to buy.

An hon. Member: Thirty years' purchase!

*Mr. CHAPLIN: Well, that is my opinion; and if hon. Members will look into the subject, upon which they can form a judgment of their own, they will find that is about the average price at which good land of this description sells. Some gentlemen advocate cheap land for the purpose, and they think that large tracts of cheap land should be taken for small holdings. I differ absolutely from that opinion. I think it would be most cruel kindness to bestow upon any labouring man whom you wish to turn into a small freeholder to place him upon poor land, however great the extent. Thirdly, I am of opinion, and I have arrived at the opinion after giving the subject very considerable study, and having had the opportunity of seeing the results of the system, that it is necessary that the house and buildings should be included in the purchase price of the land, or the person who purchases must be in possession of house and buildings of his own. Otherwise the cost of building, added to the price of the holding, will probably swamp him in his undertaking. If these conditions are fulfilled I have no doubt the system may be tried with advantage and success; but if they are wanting, I believe — and it is my duty to state with perfect frankness the views I have formed. If these conditions are wanting I believe any system of the kind is foredoomed to failure, and in this belief I am, to a great extent, borne out by the experience which we have already in this country. As I have often stated in the House before, a system of small holdings is not new to this country. On the contrary, the system has been tried for years, and it exists at this moment over wide districts of the county I have the honour to represent; and any one who chooses may for himself witness the result of the system. In the Isle of Axholme, in the north-west corner of the County of Lincoln, and, again, for miles upon the east coast of the county, there are large districts of land owned by small freeholders, and peopled and cultivated almost entirely by this class alone. All of them have suffered more or less severely during the past years of depression; but in the Isle of Axholme the position of the freeholders has been infinitely better than the position of those on the east coast of the county. There is a more hopeful spirit among them, and I hear comparatively favourable reports of their condition. Both there and in the eastern portion of the county, I do not hesitate to say, that a more frugal, industrious, hardworking, deserving class of people does not exist throughout the country. In the eastern part of the county their lot has been extremely hard; there is no doubt about it. Their work is harder and their fare is worse than that of any labouring man living upon wages, I believe, in any part of England. During the past 10 years their condition has been anything but satisfactory or encouraging. But, then, it must be remembered—and this is what I want to put clearly before hon. Members—the conditions of life in these two districts I am referring to are as widely different as they can be. In the Isle of Axholme, to begin with, the soil is generally light in character and of extreme fertility, admirably suited to what is known as market gardening, and in this differing entirely from the eastern part of the county. In the Isle of Axholme potatoes are grown in large quantities, special attention being given to a particular and profitable crop of early potatoes. Carrots also are cultivated, and onions yield a profitable crop, and of late attention has been given to the cultivation of celery, out of which they make large profits. Now, on the east coast, on the other hand, the land is heavier in character and inferior to that I have been describing, and for the most part unfitted for the productions yielded in the Isle of Axholme. Again, in the Isle of Axholme the people live chiefly, indeed, I might say almost entirely, in the villages, and cultivate their holdings at more or less distance from their homes; consequently they escape the burden of having to provide buildings—a most material factor in the consideration of this question. On the east coast, however, the case is different. In that part of the county the cultivators all reside upon the land, and it has been necessary to provide house and buildings in the case of each holding. I do not say that this condition of affairs is universal on the east side of the county, because as you come further south and approach Boston and Spalding, there, I understand, from information furnished to me—for I have not had the pleasure of personally inspecting that part of the country—there, I understand, the buildings are admirable, the cultivation first rate, and the neatness of the farms remarkable, and the industry is conducted under a condition of affairs which affords a happy instance of what can be done under a system of small holdings. But there, again, the land is exceptionally rich, and even though it has been known to have been bought at £100 an acre, yet still even at that price profits have been made at one time out of it. But I think I have troubled the House long enough; and without showing any hostility to a measure of this kind, and being heartily desirous of promoting an increase in the number of small landholders throughout England—I think I have said enough to show that we ought to be cautious in proceeding with legislation on this subject, and that anything we do in this direction must for the present be more or less of a tentative character. I hope that in pointing out some of my objections to provisions in the Bill I have not seemed to express myself as unfriendly to the principle and the aim and objects its promoters have in view. On behalf of the Government, I may say we are entirely in accord with the hon. Member who has introduced this Bill in the great purpose he has in view, and of which, I am bound to say, he has been the foremost champion both in this House and outside for many years; and in justice to him I am bound to say, in times when the question was not so popular or so fashionable as it is at present. My hon. Friend and I have had many a passage of arms across the floor in connection with this question, but, animated as I believe by the same object and by a mutual willingness to give and take, we have come upon this, and, I think, upon a good many other questions, a good deal nearer together; and I can, at all events, assure my hon. Friend that there is no one question upon which the Government are more entirely agreed, and none which they have more warmly at heart, than the bringing about, by any legitimate means within their power, of a wider distribution of land throughout the country than is the case at the present time. Sir, I have exercised the right of criticising the provisions of the Bill freely, but I hope not with undue severity. I have also pointed out to the House, as I thought it my duty to point out, some of the salient and chief difficulties which, in my humble judgment, present themselves in dealing with this question. Those difficulties it has been my duty to consider with all the care and attention in my power, because in the list of measures which were mentioned in the Gracious Speech from the Throne there was one for affording facilities for the acquisition of small parcels of land. Her Majesty's Government announced their intention at that time of dealing with this question, and from that intention they have not departed. We are entirely in accord with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Bordesley in the object he has in view, namely, in promoting an increase in the number of cultivating owners throughout the country; and that being, as I understand it, the principle of his measure, I have not the least hesitation on the part of Her Majesty's Government in supporting the Second Reading of the Bill.

(4.33.) Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): The House has listened with interest to the speech the right hon. Gentleman has just delivered. I think the House is to be congratulated upon the position in which this measure now stands. For my part, I am very willing to let bygones be bygones. [*Ironical Ministerial cheers.*] Yes, and very much to the advantage of hon. Gentlemen opposite. I am not desirous of introducing into this matter anything of a personal nature, as was done by the Member for the Melton Division of Leicestershire. We have listened, too, with great interest to the speech of the hon. Member for Stamford. I am not going to taunt the right hon. Gentleman opposite with his change of opinion. On the contrary; I am only delighted that he is a convert, as he admits himself to be. The right hon. Gentleman has said that since 1882 more recent inquiry has converted him, but there was an event which happened since 1882 which has done more for this question a great deal than anything else, and that is the establishment of household suffrage in the counties. That is a motive power which has not been without its influence. We have nobody left to convert now. Even the hon. Member for East Norfolk has been converted, though a few years ago he always recorded his vote against the hon. Member for Bordesley. I will not be so unkind as to remind the right hon. Gentleman opposite of the sentiments he formerly entertained, because I am only too glad that he has altered them; but the House has listened with great curiosity to hear what fruits meet for repentance the right hon. Gentleman is going to bring forth. In that respect I confess I have felt a little disappointed. When Henry IV. of France was converted from the Huguenot faith, he said that Paris was well worth a Mass. Possibly the right hon. Gentleman may also think that the Treasury Bench is well worth a Mass. The House knows what the hon. Member for Bordesley has proposed, and has heard the criticisms—I will not say the hostile criticisms—of the right hon. Gentleman. I will not say that the right hon. Gentleman has poured cold water on the Bill. I would rather say that he has drenched it with a tepid fluid. That is, I think, a rather more appropriate description of the criticisms of the right hon. Gentleman. But the question is not what the Bill of the hon. Member for Bordesley is or what the Government think of it. The question is—What is the Bill of the Government going to be? On that subject there has been a most singular reticence on the part of the right hon. Gentleman. The Government put this question into the Queen's Speech; they have expressed their earnest desire to create a system which a very few years ago the right hon. Gentleman thought disastrous and injurious; and they are now of opinion that the multiplication of small holdings in this country is a matter of supreme importance. We are all agreed upon that, and a most favourable situation presents itself to the Government in which to undertake a Bill. They know quite well—they have seen enough to-day to assure them—that they will not encounter the resistance of the Party opposite; on the contrary, in the carrying out of the principle of such a measure they would receive our cordial support. Why, then, does the House not hear of their Bill? Why is it not laid on the Table of the House? If the measure of the hon. Member for Bordesley is defective, if it is so full of dangers, why does not the House know what are the plans of the Government on this question? Surely this is a matter at least as important as the settlement of tithes? Is the land question connected with a population of 25,000,000 or thereabouts in England, less important than the land question connected with 5,000,000 of people in Ireland? Why, then, are we not to see the proposals of the Government upon this subject? Is their Bill, promised last year as well as this year, of less importance than the proposals made with reference to public houses last year? Why did not the Government utilise all the time expended upon that question? The House ought not to be told that the Government have no time for this measure. Let them produce a Bill which will carry out the views agreed to on both sides of the House, and a very short time will suffice to carry it. The right hon. Gentleman opposite said he had maturely considered this question, and he laid down three conditions which he did not seem to think were fulfilled by the Bill of the hon. Member for Bordesley. I do not say that I agree with him. I have seen instances in which very bad land has been converted into good land by the industry of the proprietor. It was once said by Arthur Young that it was the sense of property that turned sand into gold. Now, what are the three conditions laid down by the right hon. Gentleman? He says—

> "I am in favour of multiplying largely small properties in this country, but on three conditions. First of all, the land must be good; secondly, it must be cheap; and, thirdly, there must be some condition made with reference to building."

If these are essential conditions in the view of the Government, they must have a plan for carrying them into effect; and if they have maturely considered the matter, then let the House see their Bill embodying those conditions. I have a right to ask these questions of the Government, because it is sometimes said—it has been said this afternoon—"Why did you not do this in 1886?" Well, Sir, we had a very short life in 1886. I do not know that I can say it was a merry one, but we were ejected from Office in about three months. But this Government has been in Office five Sessions. They have promised this Bill, but where is it? Let the House see it, at all events. That is not going to happen today which happened to the Bill in March, 1886, on a Wednesday afternoon. The hon. Member for Bordesley was at that time absent from the House through circumstances over which he had no control. His Bill was consequently brought forward by the hon. Member for Ilkeston, and it was talked out by gentlemen on the other side of the House. They are not going to talk the Bill out this afternoon, nor will there be a Division upon it. In all probability the House will affirm the principle of the Bill unanimously. We may differ as to the details of the Bill; but I take it that the Second Reading will be equivalent to a Resolution that it is a good thing to multiply small holdings, that that should be done by Local Authorities, and that means and facilities should be given to those Local Authorities for accomplishing that object. The President of the Board of Agriculture has laid down three conditions, and I shall take the liberty of laying down three conditions also. In the first place, I venture to say we shall do nothing effective in this matter until we have Local Authorities which enjoy the confidence and know the wishes of

Sir. W. Harcourt

the localities. We are waiting for the Government Bill on Small Holdings, and we are also waiting for the Government Bill on District Councils. Why have we not had the latter Bill before? The Government have dealt with this matter like people who are hesitating on the brink of a cold bath and not liking to take the plunge. Why is there this hesitation, this extraordinary indisposition to bring forward a Bill which is the only measure which can give life and vitality to legislation such as that before us? A suggestion has been made that the power should be entrusted to a body like the Board of Guardians. It is nonsense to give the control of this Bill to Boards of Guardians. Anyone who knows anything of Boards of Guardians will know that it would be like a steam engine without a boiler to give powers of this kind to them. The first condition for an effective measure of this kind is a body which will know what the people want, and which will have a desire to give it to them. The country villagers know nothing of the Board of Guardians, who very often know as little of the villagers. Another difficulty is that the body must not only be willing to give the people what they want, but must—and that is my second condition—have an instrument to enable them to work the Bill—it must have compulsory powers. The Minister for Agriculture says that there has been a good deal of give and take between him and the hon. Member for Bordesley. I do not know what has been given up by the right hon. Gentleman, but the hon. Member for Bordesley has given up the principal feature of his previous measure—the principle of compulsion. Upon that very subject my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham, speaking of compulsion, said—

> "It is a blessed word. I would not change it for the world. All previous efforts to deal with this matter have failed simply because there have been no compulsory powers at the back of them."

I entirely believe that; but the President of the Board of Agriculture says these are the vile doctrines of modern Radicalism. I should certainly not have called my right hon. Friend a modern Radical. If anything he is an ancient one. Then the hon. Member for Bordesley said—

> "The time has come when we must keep faith with these men. We must not pass a measure which would be inoperative, and any measure would be inoperative unless it contained compulsory powers."

I believe that also. It is not a matter of speculation. We know it has been so in the case of the Allotments Act, which was inoperative until compulsory powers were applied to it. Not that they were used in every case; but the moment the Bill was strengthened by compulsory powers it became perfectly operative, because, having those compulsory powers behind it, we got by voluntary offer what we could not get without them. Upon the celebrated occasion in 1886, when this question was discussed, there was a speech by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I hope he is a convert as well as the President of the Board of Agriculture, and that he thinks as well now of small holdings as he thought ill of them then—the right hon. Gentleman made a speech upon this very point. He was all against compulsion, but then he was against the plan altogether. He said, referring to a former measure—

> "If there is no compulsion, then the proposal of my right hon. Friend the Member for West Birmingham will share the fate of the Act of George III. With the experience of that Act before us I ask, is it wise to embark on a measure of this kind? With compulsion you may do much, but is the Liberal Party prepared to adopt the principle of compulsion?"

The Liberal Party were prepared then, as now, to adopt that principle, but are the Government? Because if they are not—and the President of the Board of Agriculture and the hon. Member for Bordesley have agreed to throw over compulsion—then we have the authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer for saying that without compulsion we can do nothing at all, but with compulsion we may do much. My third condition is that we must have power, not simply of buying, but of transferring land. We must have some cheap system of land transfer. That is a cardinal question in this matter. Last year, or the year before, when Her Majesty's Government introduced into the House of Lords a Bill for the purpose of cheapening the transfer of land, the majority in that House threw the Bill out, no doubt because that majority contemplated that it might lead to the multiplication of small holdings. Why not? Why did they throw out the Bill of the Tory Government? But that is not all. There is another essential condition, and that is that the persons who have the land should have the power to part with it to the Local Authority. That has been one of our great difficulties in the past, and I was glad to see the hon. Member for Stamford point out this difficulty. Any pretence of dealing with that question by persons who are not prepared to grapple with a matter of this kind is a mere delusion, and it is not keeping faith with the persons whom the Bill is intended to benefit. The Government are offering them a remedy which must, in its nature, be inoperative from the very essence of the case. Unless you choose to create a capable and willing authority to deal with this question, unless you arm that authority with compulsory powers, unless you choose to have a cheap system of transfer of land, and unless you deal with the law of settlement and life estates, you cannot give a living effect to a proposal of this kind. I have deliberately avoided going into the details of the Bill: I have endeavoured to state what are the deficiencies of the Bill, not on points of detail, but in its motive powers. I hope, in so far as the Bill is intended to assert that it is desirable that such a system should be established, that both sides of the House will agree to give a unanimous vote in favour of the Second Reading. The main point is, What are the intentions of the Government? It is not for them to merely criticise the Bill of the hon. Member for Bordesley. Are they prepared to take the Bill up and carry it through, or bring forward a measure of their own? Because unless they do one or the other of these two things, I do not think there is a great deal of importance to be attached to their declarations.

(5.4.) MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): As I was Chairman of the Committee which sat on this subject last year I should like to say a few words, but at this late hour I shall make my observations extremely brief.

I must congratulate the House upon what is the most extraordinary feature of this interesting Debate, namely, the unanimity which now seems to prevail with regard to a matter which in times past has been a subject of angry Party controversy. Even my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) declared his pious intention, which he was unable strictly to fulfil, of letting bygones be bygones. I cannot but regret that the necessities of a carefully prepared speech led my right hon. Friend to occupy a considerable time in referring to questions of ancient history for the purpose of convincing the House that he is the only consistent man now living. My right hon. Friend has suggested, probably not without reason, that the extension of the franchise, which has given to the agricultural labourer a voice in the Government of the country, has had an extraordinarily persuasive effect, not only on Conservatives, but also on Members of the Opposition, in regard to questions in which agricultural labourers are interested. I do not think any of us need be ashamed to say that one result secured by the extension of the franchise has been the greater knowledge which we now possess of the wants, the aspirations, and the claims of the agricultural labourer. Although that may be so, and although the interests of Party may somewhat affect the question at the present time, I believe my hon. Friend the Member for Bordesley (Mr. Jesse Collings) is altogether free from any Party imputation in this matter. He took up the matter before there was any Party capital to be made out of it, and I believe that those who differ from him, as well as those who agree with him, will admit that he has pursued undeviatingly a most unselfish course in the interests of the agricultural labourer. I cannot help making a contrast between my hon. Friend the Member for Bordesley, who has at heart the interests of the labourer, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby, who has at heart the interests of somebody else. My hon. Friend the Member for Bordesley is seeking in what way he can secure for his clients the largest amount of good at the earliest possible date, and for that he is willing to make concessions—he is willing to give and take, and to receive half a loaf rather than no bread; and probably as a result he has now put the question in a position to which I believe all the efforts of my right hon. Friend (Sir W. Harcourt) would have failed to raise it. What is the position of the right hon. Member for Derby? I admit that the Bill does not give us all we have a right to hope for or expect; but the right hon. Gentleman, instead of proposing to deal with the measure, denounces it altogether as insufficient and inoperative, and urges upon the Government, knowing as he does the conditions of Parliamentary business, that they shall first deal with District Councils; that, in the second place, they shall pass a Land Registry Bill; that, in the third place, they shall introduce a Bill to deal with the Law of Settlement; and that when they have done all these things, they shall see whether they cannot give some practical measure of this kind to the labourers.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I did not say that all or any of these measures were to be introduced before the Government Bill. I said these measures would be necessary to make it effective.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Well, what on earth would be the good of proceeding with this Bill if, according to my right hon. Friend, it would be absolutely inoperative and ineffective, and if we should put it on one side?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Really, the right hon. Gentleman must not misrepresent me. I did not say that. On the contrary; I said I should support the Bill, and I did not wish it to be put aside.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Then my right hon. Friend has put himself in the absurd position of supporting a Bill which he declares beforehand will be ineffective and inoperative. That, at all events, is not the position of those who are now supporting the Bill. We believe the Bill will be operative, and that in the main point on which it has been challenged by my right hon. Friend the concession of my hon. Friend the Member for Bordesley will not seriously interfere with its working. My right hon. Friend has quoted a passage from a speech of mine in which I urged the necessity of compulsion in the settlement of this question. I do not conceal from hon. Gentlemen opposite that, sooner or later, compulsion will be necessary for the complete settlement of the question. But what we are doing now is an extraordinary and a novel thing, and without precedent. There has been nothing like it. It is not even like the Ashbourne Act, which was in itself a strong precedent. That Act called in the assistance ot the community to give to persons who were already partial owners complete ownership in the land. In the present case we are calling in the aid of the community to make a man an owner who has no connection whatever with the land except the indirect connection that his labour is expended upon it. We are, in fact, establishing a precedent for calling in the aid of the State to set up people in business. That is a tremendous, important, and novel precedent. But I believe the reasons in its favour are so strong that they justify the setting up of that precedent. It is, however, wise and reasonable that we should proceed step by step. Therefore, I readily assent to the proposal that in the first instance this should be treated as an experiment, and that we should not ask for more than £5,000,000. I do not doubt that we shall get all the land required without resort to compulsion. Why, therefore, should we put the obstacle of compulsion in their way when it is absolutely necessary for the passing of the Bill that compulsion should be omitted from it? If this Bill should be a success, as I am firmly convinced it will be, and if the House should then be willing to view the experiment with favour, then I conceive it would be found necessary, as in case of the allotments, to introduce compulsory powers, and I do not doubt that by that time there would be such a further advance of public opinion as would give support to the House. Of course, I am anxious that the House in legislating should follow the principles laid down in the Report of the Committee. I am, therefore, anxious that the principle of reserving something as a quit rent should be maintained. The community is to be called in for the benefit of one class, and if the community can also be benefited by the scheme an immense impetus will be given to it. But I do not think it would be wise to reserve three-fourths of the value for the quit rent, because, if there were any further fall in the price of land, the quit rent would become the rack rent, and then there would be an agitation for the reduction of the rent—an agitation which might become dangerous, because, in the course of time, the origin of rent of this kind is apt to be lost sight of, and people come to regard it as a tax upon their industry. This would not be the case if the quit rent were so small as to be more in the nature of a Scotch feu. I hope, therefore, that something will be reserved for the benefit of the Local Authority, but that it will not be allowed to exceed one-fourth of the total rent. The Minister for Agriculture said something about the desirability of Local Authorities letting land as well as selling it for the purpose of making small holdings. May I point out to him that, after all, the Local Authorities now have power to let land by way of allotments, and the only change proposed is that, whereas now the public is limited to letting land up to one acre, we propose that this should be extended to the letting of land up to 10 acres. The reason is obvious. You will find you have not only to create facilities for small holdings, but you have to create a class of small holders, who only exist to a very limited extent at the present time. In order to create them you must enable the labourer who begins with an allotment to go on bit by bit increasing it until he is in a position to become a small holder. He will not be in the first instance in a position to become one, and you must increase the steps of the ladder by which he will be enabled to reach that position. I do not think it is a matter of grave consideration whether the limit should be five acres or 10. Then there is a question about the power of resumption. Here you have a Public Authority—that is to say, the community—purchasing land or lending the whole purchase money to the small holder. Surely in return for that it is entitled not merely to have the ordinary power of resumption given under existing Acts of Parliament, but a general power of resumption on fixed terms settled beforehand whenever the interests of the community demand it. I agree with my right hon. Friend the Minister for Agriculture that this power exists so far as concerns many of the public purposes for which Local Authorities now take land; and it seems to me that for all these public purposes in which the interest of the community is concerned, they ought to have power with regard to the land, which they themselves have purchased, to take it back again at the agricultural value. Suppose that a town buys land with the view of letting it for small holdings, and that subsequently it is wanted for building. Having put a man on land of this kind for the purpose of creating him a small holder, are you going to allow him to become a building speculator and to take the whole profit which is due to the increase of the town which has conferred the benefit on him? I say that would be absurd; and if that were to be the rule, Local Authorities would refuse to purchase land for the purpose of small holdings in the neighbourhood of towns. But if, on the contrary, they had the power to resume possession for building purposes, to take it for the benefit of the community, there would be nothing to prevent buying land and using it temporarily, at all events for the purposes of this Bill. Now, I think my right hon. Friend the Member for Derby was simulating when he professed to be unaware what is meant by the acceptance of the principle of the Bill by the Government.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I did not say I did not understand the principle of the Bill. I said I understood the principle of the Bill to be that it is desirable to increase the number of small holdings in this country, and to do it by the Local Authority, and I thoroughly approve of that principle.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I did not say the right hon. Gentleman did not understand the principle of the Bill, but I said that the right hon. Gentleman pretended not to know what was meant when the Government accepted the principle. I answer the right hon. Gentleman out of his own words; the acceptance of the principle means that the Government are pledged to introduce a Bill which will give the Local Authority power to buy land in order to create small holdings. I, for one, am prepared for the acceptance of the principle in these broad terms; and when the right hon. Gentleman looks at the Report and the proceedings of the Committee, he will find that the Government, through the Minister for Agriculture, are committed also to many other details out of which a thoroughly practical and satisfactory Bill may be constructed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Wednesday next.

POSSESSION OF GAME BILL.—(No. 226.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

The House divided:—Ayes 147; Noes 95.—(Div. List, No. 82.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

ARMY ANNUAL BILL.—(No. 240.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

The SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): I would ask the hon. Member not to persist in this Motion, though if he presses it I have no desire to put the Committee to the inconvenience of a Division. This

Bill is exempt from the Rule that bars opposed business at this hour, and his objection to Progress does not hold.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Clauses agreed to.

New Clause.

*SIR JOHN POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): I beg to move the new clause of which I have given notice, and I hope the noble Lord will assent to it.

New Clause ("Marine officers may sit on Courts Martial on Marines afloat,"—(*Sir J. P. Hennessy*,)—brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be now read a second time."

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): In the form in which the hon. Member makes his proposal this would not be consistent with the Army Act or the Naval Discipline Act. As it is a matter requiring some further consideration, perhaps it will be better to adjourn the discussion now.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

PUBLIC BODIES (PROVISIONAL ORDERS) BILL.—(No. 233.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Tomlinson.*)

MR. CRAIG (Newcastle) objected.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): May I ask if the Government agree to this Bill?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): In the absence of my right hon. Friend, I have to say the Government do not offer opposition to the Bill.

*MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I hope my hon. Friend will not insist upon his objection. The object of the Bill is to remove certain doubts that have arisen as to the power of certain Public Bodies to appear before the Committee appointed to examine Railway Bills, and without the Bill these bodies are placed in positions of extreme difficulty.

MR. CRAIG: After that explanation from my hon. Friend I withdraw my objection.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

MOTION.

TOWN HOLDINGS.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That the Select Committee on Town Holdings be re-appointed to inquire into that portion of the original reference to the Committee which the Committee was precluded by want of time from reporting on last Session, namely, 'into the question of imposing a direct assessment on the owners of ground rents and on the owners of increased values imparted to land by building operations or other improvements.'"—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

*(5.45.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): In this proceeding I think we are creating a new precedent. This is the sixth year of the appointment of this Committee, and it has been sitting continuously for five years. I had the honour of a seat upon the Committee for four years, and, without boasting, I may say I was most regular in my attendance. But I happened to be the only Member from this side of the House who took the view that occupying tenants should have the right to purchase their freeholds, and I presume, in consequence of that, though I was anxious to be re-appointed last year I was excluded from the Committee. It is, I think, rather a novel proceeding in the re-appointment of a Committee when it lasts more than a year that changes should be made in the *personnel*, because of the views of individual Members, and I think it would be in accordance with Parliamentary practice that a Committee should be re-appointed as it stands unless a Member wishes not to be re-nominated. Though I have now no personal wish in the matter, I think it right to make a formal protest against a proceeding tending to give a purely partisan character to Committees and to detract from the value of their work.

(5.46.) MR. D. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I object to the proposed constitution of the Committee, and claim that inasmuch as the Committee deals with a subject upon which Wales is interested the Committee should have Welsh representation.

(5.46.) THE PATRONAGE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. AKERS-DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): As the branch of the subject to be investigated by the Committee this Session entirely affects Scotland, in accordance with the promise given by my right hon. Friend, certain Scotch Members have been nominated to the exclusion of others. As regards the question raised by the hon. Member for Merthyr, it is a reasonable proposal that the Principality should be represented. As regards the remarks of my hon. Friend the Member for Islington, certainly the alterations have not been made by me in consequence of any views he may have expressed in Committee upstairs, which have never come to my knowledge.

(5.47.) MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): It is, I believe, not certain that the Committee will take no other than Scotch business; but though that may be so, I may be allowed to say that Scotch Members will not object to the appointment of a Member from the Principality.

*(5.47.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): We are quite prepared to assent to the nomination of two additional Members, one of whom may be a Welsh Member.

Ordered, that the Select Committee on Town Holdings be re-appointed to inquire into that portion of the original reference to the Committee which the Committee was precluded by want of time from reporting on last Session, namely, "into the question of imposing a direct assessment on the owners of ground rents and on the owners of increased values imparted to land by building operations or other improvements."

Ordered, That the Committee do consist of Twenty-four Members.

The Committee was accordingly nominated of,—Mr. Tyssen Amherst, Mr. Gerald Balfour, Mr. Barbour, Mr. Baumann, Mr. Beadel, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Buchanan, Mr. Channing, Mr. Cameron Corbett, Mr. Crilly, Sir John Ellis, Mr. Elton, Mr. Esslemont, Mr. Monro Ferguson, Mr. Lewis Fry, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Knowles, Mr. Lawson, Sir William Marriott, Colonel Nolan, Sir Charles Pearson, Mr. James Rowlands, Mr. Mark Stewart, and Mr. Powell-Williams.

Mr. D. Thomas

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.

Ordered, That Five be the quorum.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

BRINE PUMPING (COMPENSATION FOR SUBSIDENCE) BILL.

Mr. Gainsford Bruce, Colonel Hill, Mr. Lyell, and Mr. Mather were nominated Members of the Select Committee on the Brine Pumping (Compensation for Subsidence) Bill, with Three Members by the Committee of Selection.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Seventh Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

POSSESSION OF GAME BILL.

On the Motion for Adjournment,

(5.53.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): Are we now to understand that the Possession of Game Bill is supported by the Government? In consequence of Members passing out of the House I did not hear the title of the Bill as it was read by the Clerk, and many Members, I know, had no knowledge of the nature of the Bill. But I understand that the Government are supporting the Bill; is that the case?

(5.53.) THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The Government, the hon. Member will remember, have made no announcement whatever in reference to the Bill.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

MR. JUSTIN M'CARTHY (Londonderry): Can the right hon. Gentleman tell us what are the definite arrangements for to-morrow—in what order is it proposed to take the Irish Votes?

MR. JACKSON: It is proposed to take the Votes in the order in which they will be placed on the Paper. We propose to begin with the Relief of Distress Supplementary Vote, then to take the Railway Vote as second, and the other Irish Supplementary Votes in order, the Constabulary Vote coming, I think, third. Following these will be the Naval Supplementary Votes.

House adjourned at five minutes before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 12th March, 1891.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Lord Teignmouth — Petition of Sir Charles John Shore, Baron Teignmouth in the Peerage of Ireland, claiming a right to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland; read, and referred to the Lord Chancellor to consider and report thereupon to the House.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTS OF ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND REPEAL BILL [H.L.]—(No. 52.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD DENMAN: My Lords, I believe it is competent to Members of this House to bring questions of privilege before your Lordships at any time. I wish to complain of a misreport of a speech of mine on this very intricate subject of the Local Government Acts of England and Scotland Repeal Bill. I stated that the Prime Minister had given his opinion that the majority of the House was in favour of this measure, and I stated at the same time that I thought his Lordship was misinformed. It makes a very great difference those words being left out, and I conceive it is the duty of the reporter of this House to send the speeches early enough to those who have uttered them to enable speeches to be corrected. Another object of this interruption, if I may call it so, is this: I wish to know if the Clerk of the House has any right to refuse notice of any question that a Peer chooses to place before him? In my opinion, it is the duty of the Clerk to put a notice, if requested, upon the Paper, and if that notice be informal, the House itself can correct the Mover of it. I mention this particularly in relation to the Duration of Speeches in Parliament Bill. That Bill was sent to the printer, with a request that a proof might be sent to me. It was altered very materially, but no proof was sent to me, and, to my surprise, I found the Bill in the Paper without my authorisation. Certainly the noble Marquess at the head of the Government postponed it for 10 months, which is really worse than a final rejection. I believe the noble Marquess wishes to do that which is fair, and I trust when I make the Motion to-morrow that that Order may be rescinded that the House in general will see the justice of my claim, and will allow the Bill to reappear in the Paper.

Order discharged.

CLERGY DISCIPLINE (IMMORALITY) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 45.)

COMMITTEE.

House in Committee (according to Order.)

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2.

***LORD GRIMTHORPE**: My Lords, I have an Amendment on this clause. I only suggest to the most rev. Prelate that a few words should be omitted which are evidently surplusage. They may have had some meaning as the Bill was originally drawn; that I do not remember, but as it stands the 2nd clause stands thus, omitting the early part of it. After referring to cases where clergymen have been convicted, it' goes on to say—

> "The following consequence shall follow that is to say, the ecclesiastical preferment held by such clergyman shall become vacant."

It is perfectly obvious that to provide that "the following consequence shall follow" is absolute nonsense, and the Bill would, I think, be a great deal better without those words.

***THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY**: I would ask the noble Lord whether he does not think these words still serve a purpose with regard to the 2nd subsection? If the words are omitted, as the noble Lord proposes, the 2nd subsection would want considerable alteration.

***LORD GRIMTHORPE**: I must say I doubt that, because the words "Provided that if," and so on, in the subsection are only interpolated to qualify the 1st section. Let us leave that out for a moment. It says that at the time of the conviction becoming conclusive for the purposes of the Act the ecclesiastical preferment held by the clergyman "shall become vacant." Then read on—

> "The same consequence also shall follow after the like date if a bastardy order under the enactments for the time being relating to bastardy is made on a clergyman, and is either not appealed from, or on appeal is confirmed, or if a clergyman is found by the verdict of a jury or the decision of a Court sitting without a jury on an issue in a divorce or matrimonial cause to have committed adultery."

I have read it in full purposely, so that your Lordships may know exactly what it says, as the most rev. Prelate has referred to it, and I must say I still cannot see that there is any object whatever in these words which I am moving to omit, or that the 2nd sub-section has anything to do with them.

LORD HERSCHELL: It is quite true that the proviso interpolated is a proviso on the first section. It is the last consequence mentioned that is referred to which would, therefore, refer to the first part of the clause, and not the last proviso but one. I think the words do no harm, and that the clause is safer left as it is.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: I will move the Amendment.

Amendment moved, to omit the words, "the following consequence shall follow, that is to say."—(*Lord Grimthorpe.*)

Amendment negatived.

Verbal Amendments made.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: On this clause I have an Amendment to propose. I stated the general nature of it on the Second Reading of the Bill. You will observe that in the group of cases which are included in Clause 3, and which admit of many varieties and degrees there is a provision that the conviction is to be conclusive; but, according to the clause, the last words of it provide that the clergyman shall be heard to prove mitigating circumstances. Now, the first question I ask is, how are those mitigating circumstances to be proved? Of course, if justice is to be done, there must be a full inquiry into the matter on both sides, and this is one of the cases in which the clergyman wouldcertainly be entitled to what may for shortness be called a jury. The probability is that he will very often desire to have one. The result would be he would go on and prove his innocence if he can, and he may be able to prove absolute innocence. The first trial will not be conclusive as to punishment, and if he is to be allowed to go on proving all he can he may succeed in proving that he was absolutely innocent. Such cases are not at all unknown; but the Court would have to say to him, "You are guilty, because you have been found guilty by another Court; but we do not think you are guilty, and we will treat you as having proved mitigating circumstances, and give you a very slight punishment, or none at all." That seems an absurdity. What you want to provide is this: that the Ecclesiastical Court shall know all the circumstances; and it strikes me that the simplest way of doing it is to allow the Ecclesiastical Court to have all the evidence apon which the man was convicted laid before it. Then it would have all the materials that have been considered necessary to be brought forward in the first instance. Then comes the question whether he should be allowed an appeal, and upon that point I am bound to say I am rather against what I have put down as my own Amendment. I have thought it possible that some noble Lord might think that in certain cases the clergyman ought to be entitled to an appeal; but I believe, that if you adopt the other part of my Amendment, namely, that all the evidence is to be laid before the Court which has to pass the sentence or before the Bishop, you will ensure that the Ecclesiastical Court knows all the circumstances—that it has a complete knowledge of everything, and that is what you want. I quite agree with what the noble and learned Lord opposite said on Second Reading that you must run the risk of a certain amount of injustice being done, but you need not do more than run that risk. The moment you say there is to be another trial, surely you ought to provide that the other trial shall be as complete as it can be without involving extra expense, and if you simply provide that the evidence which has been used in the Temporal Court shall be laid before the Ecclesiastical Court you will do all that is necessary for securing justice on both sides. Otherwise you will run the risk which I have pointed out before. I wish to point out that this only applies to cases where the guilt of the accused clergyman admits of a variety of degrees. Take, for instance, cases of assaults. There may be cases of assault involving indecency, such as I alluded to the other night, in the case of Mr. Hatch, who had not, it afterwards turned out, committed any offence at all, and, therefore, mere mitigation would have been nonsense. That seems to me to be a case which ought to be subject to revision in the subsequent trial, as before a jury, if the clergyman thinks fit to demand it.

Amendment moved, to omit the following words :—

"This section shall not preclude the clergyman from being heard to prove mitigating circumstances,"

and to insert the following :—

"The evidence on which he was convicted shall be laid before the Court, and its judgment shall be subject to appeal under the same conditions as in other cases, and the evidence shall in like manner be laid before the Bishop if he has to pass sentence summarily."—(*Lord Grimthorpe.*)

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE : Ordinarily, as I understand it, the Judge takes a note of the evidence at trials of this description and it is the Judge's note ordinarily which is looked at afterwards in other Courts. Does my noble Friend mean that the Judge's note of the evidence should be laid before the Ecclesiastical Courts ?

*LORD GRIMTHORPE : I think that probably this result would follow as in the case of what is called the preliminary inquiry in reference to drunken clergymen. There is a provision in the old Clergy Discipline Act that the evidence shall be laid before the Bishop, and the parties either agree to have a shorthand writer, or the notes are taken by the Court. I may say that I have taken them myself to save the expense of a shorthand writer. I think that is an answer to that question.

LORD HERSCHELL : I have no objection certainly to the purpose which the noble Lord has in view. I think it is very desirable that before passing sentence and awarding punishment the Ecclesiastical Court should know what the character of the offence was as disclosed by the evidence, because, of course, that would obviously influence or might influence considerably the punishment to be inflicted. Therefore I agree entirely with his object, and I think the words at the end of the clause to which he refers were added with that notion. Certainly I do not think the language happy, though I rather thought it was my noble and learned Friend's.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE : No.

LORD HERSCHELL : I rather thought that was so, because I had a manuscript sent from him in which it appeared. However, we quite agree that the words as they stand will not do, and I had thought of suggesting some such words as these—that the clergyman "may be allowed to show the circumstances under which the offence was committed in mitigation of punishment," but such a proviso is again open, no doubt, to the objection which my noble and learned Friend has raised that the matter might be more simply dealt with by providing that the Ecclesiastical Court shall have the evidence given in the temporal Court before it. I think if those words were adopted there would be nothing to prevent the accused person being heard in mitigation of punishment. I fancy that any Court in dealing with a case before it, would hear whatever could be said in mitigation of punishment without any express provision; but in providing for it the difficulty, of course, arises of determining what the machinery to be used is for bringing the evidence before the Court. I think we might consider in Standing Committee how best we could do it. I quite sympathise with my noble and learned Friend's object, and agree that it would be desirable to ensure that being done.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE : At present I will withdraw the Amendment, reserving to myself liberty to bring it before the Standing Committee.

Amendment (by leave of the House) withdrawn.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 4.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE : My Lords, in regard to Clause 4, I cannot help thinking that the language requires amendment. What it says is that if there is no appeal the decision pronounced shall be conclusive—

"Upon the expiration of the time limited for such appeal or the expiration of two months from the time of the conviction order or finding, whichever is earliest."

Now, if that means it shall be absolutely conclusive when the time for appealing has expired, I can quite understand it; but surely, if more than two months are allowed, it ought to provide for that. Surely that must be the object, and I venture to suggest that it requires amendment, so as to make the term of two months applicable only when no time for appealing is really fixed. I propose, therefore, to omit the words "whichever is earliest," and to insert the words "when no such time is limited."

Amendment agreed to.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: Then in the next line, at the beginning of the next sub-section, the language is not clear, and I think the intention is insufficiently expressed. The words "in the event of an appeal" overlook a case provided for by the previous sub-section, because the appeal may afterwards be abandoned, and I, therefore, propose to put in after the word "appeal" the words on which judgment is pronounced by the Court of Appeal.

Amendment agreed to.

Verbal Amendments made.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 5, 6, and 7 agreed to.

Clause 8.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I would suggest an Amendment, instead of the too indefinite words "for good reason" on page 5, line 14. The provision is this: that in certain cases which are necessary to be provided for, the Chancellor may—

"Appoint some clergyman or layman, as the case may require, who is willing to serve and who is not objected to by either party for good reason,"

to make up the necessary number of assessors. There must be somebody to determine the sufficiency of the objection; and I, therefore, suggest that those words "for good reason" should be left out, and that there should be inserted instead "for cause shown and deemed sufficient by the Chancellor." It is a matter which must be decided at the time, and it would in that case be for the Chancellor to decide whether there was sufficient reason for objecting or not.

Amendment agreed to.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK: Before this clause is passed, I should desire to point out one matter which will probably have to be considered by the Standing Committee. Sub-section 4 provides that the assessors chosen shall attend when required, and that if anyone fails to do so "he shall be disqualified for acting or being elected again as assessor." Supposing a man is ill or that his absence is entirely owing to circumstances over which he has no control, it is not intended surely to disqualify him from acting in future. It would be wrong in such a case to say that his appointment as assessor shall be at an end, and it should surely be subject to this proviso: that "any one without assigning some sufficient reason for his absence" shall be disqualified, and that it should be for the Judge of the Court to decide as to the sufficiency of the cause.

LORD HERSCHELL: I quite agree with the most rev. Prelate that it should be so. The Chancellor is to declare the vacancy, and he should be satisfied with regard to any excuse offered that it is a valid excuse.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: Would it not do to say "except for good cause allowed by the Chancellor?"

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK: Yes, that would do; but I am afraid I am not in order in suggesting it now, and I will say no more about it at present.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 9 to 12 agreed to.

Clause 13.

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I am disposed to think that the words at the end of this clause will require modification, "that if an appeal is brought the operation of the sentence shall be suspended until the appeal is dismissed or abandoned." There may be upon the appeal a sentence which is, on the one hand, partly in favour of, or, on the other, wholly against the person accused. I would suggest the substitution of the word "determined" for "dismissed."

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: I have an earlier Amendment in line 12, which is this: It is in Sub-section 3, which provides that—

> "If sentenced to suspension from the performance of the duties of his ecclesiastical preferment for any term, he shall not during that term reside in the house of residence of that preferment, nor if the sentence so requires reside within the distance specified in the sentence from the place of such preferment."

The object of that sub-section is, of course, to provide against interference on the part of a suspended clergyman in the affairs of the parish. Of course, though he might be required not to reside it would be possible for him to return for a few hours and do a great deal of mischief. The real evil does not consist always in the actual residence of the suspended clergyman in the house, although that might be very annoying, but it mainly consists in the fact that he may persist in presiding in the vestry, interfering in the management of the schools, and taking other part in the general administration of the parish. It is, of course, the object of this part of the Bill to prevent that. I therefore propose to your Lordships to add, after the word "preferment," the following words:—

> "And further, he shall not, during the term, be entitled, without the leave of the Court, to exercise or perform any right or duty of or incidental or attached to his preferment."

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment moved, to omit the word "dismissed" and to insert the word "determined."—(*The Earl of Selborne.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Verbal Amendments made.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 14 to 16 agreed to.

Clause 17.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK: In this clause, my Lords, I have to draw attention to the wording, which seems to me to be of very great importance. The clause makes provision for deposition by the Bishop of the diocese after the deprivation of the delinquent clergyman. It seems to me rather a strong thing to say that the Bishop of the diocese should have the power of actually degrading a clergyman, and what I was going to propose was that there should be an appeal granted him to the Archbishop. I propose, therefore, that these words should be added to the clause:—

> "Provided always that such clergyman should have the right of appeal within one month to the Archbishop of the province, whose decision shall be final."

These cases are quite analogous to many others in which the Bishop acts as regards curate's licences, sequestration of benefices, and many other like cases, in all of which there is given an appeal to the Archbishop of the province. I cannot help thinking that the clergy would be more satisfied if there was in these very grave cases also an appeal to the Archbishop of the province; and unless the most rev. Prelate objects to the Amendment, I beg to move an Amendment that the words I have read be added to the sub-section.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: Would it not be better to include the Bishop of the diocese and the Archbishop of the province together? This point has been called to the attention of the Bishops, and I was in hopes that by this time the right reverend Bench might have thrown some light upon it. I really do not pretend myself to know whether it would absolutely require the concurrence of the Archbishop.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK: I think what I propose will do what is wanted.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: The Bishop and Archbishop being included in it together would probably avoid any possibility of conflict.

LORD HERSCHELL: Is the suggestion that they should jointly depose?

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Suppose they are both named and they differ.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: It would be subject to the decision of the Archbishop.

LORD HERSCHELL: I should have thought it would for the moment have been better to accept the most rev. Prelate's Amendment.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: I only want the proper form to be ascertained. That might be done among the Bishops themselves. Perhaps by the time we get to the Standing Committee they will have been able to settle that.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK: My Amendment is to insert after the word "diocese," in line 31, the following words:—

"Provided always that such clergyman may appeal from the said sentence within one month to the Archbishop of the province, whose decision shall be final."

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 18 and 19 agreed to.

Clause 20.

Verbal Amendments made.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 21 to 28 agreed to.

Clause 29.

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: I am not quite certain, my Lords, that the effect of some Amendments which I proposed to move upon this clause would be clearly understood. I will, therefore, with your Lordships' permission, withdraw the Amendments on Clause 29 and bring them forward in Standing Committee.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 30 agreed to.

Clause 31.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: Upon Clause 31 I have only this remark to make: It is possible there may be a case or two pending when this Act comes into operation. Now, one object of the Bill is to prevent the expense of a multitude of appeals on technicalities and things of that kind. I therefore suggest that it would be expedient to add some such words as these: "All further proceedings in any suit then pending shall be carried on according to the provisions of this Act." That proviso, I propose, should come at the end of the clause.

LORD HERSCHELL: I think that will require a little consideration, because I am not quite sure whether at after stages you could in an old suit work under this new procedure. I think I understand the object which my noble Friend has in view, but perhaps he will defer that proposal to be hereafter considered.

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: I will omit that Amendment for the present.

Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee: and to be printed as amended. (No. 59.)

The Archbishop of York

POLLEN FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.
(No. 51.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD MACNAGHTEN: I have to ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading to this Bill, which has passed the House of Commons. It relates only to Ireland, and its object is the better preservation of the Pollen Fisheries by making it illegal to take or sell under-sized fish. I need only mention that it has the approbation of the Fisheries Board in Ireland, and I move now that it be read a second time.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the whole House to-morrow.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 55.)

Amendments reported (according to order).

Clause 1.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY: My Lords, I wish to call the attention of the noble Marquess to Sub-section 3 of Clause 7, and to the Amendment moved substituting County Court proceedings for distress. On the last occasion the Government said that certain words should be inserted in that sub-section, and I must say that that promise has been strictly, but too literally fulfilled. We had a right to expect, as the noble Marquess moved the suspension of that section, that something would be done to give us access to the County Courts, but now words have been added which were not there before referring to the provisions of Sections 81 and 85 of the Act. That is to say, that sub-section has been made worse than it was before by bringing forward more prominently the provisions of the Tithe Bill. Then, in addition to that, in Standing Committee, all words referring to the Tithe Act and tithe rent-charge have been removed, and words substituted referring to the Act of the 6 & 7 Will. IV. chap. 71. I am afraid that Her Majesty's Government, who have given no reason for shutting the landowners out of the County Courts other than that of passing the Bill more easily, are only playing into the hands of their enemies, who do not care for the occupiers, but simply wish to provide opportunities for further disturbances. I hope it may not be so; and if, fortunately, it should not—if, in reality, the people who now object to the tithe are blinded and satisfied with these words—then, indeed, the ostrich will be justified, which thinks that it has concealed itself when it has buried its head in the sand. I suppose at this time it is of no use to say anything more, or to ask for the omission of the words "not otherwise" in the sub-section, if the Government is firmly decided upon not allowing the landowners access to the County Courts. I would also ask the noble Marquess if he can find any words regarding the rating of the clergymen, which will provide that they shall not be in a worse position than before. At present, in most unions, they are allowed 15 per cent. off the gross tithe; and if they are in future to be assessed as occupiers, they will lose that advantage, and be rated rather higher than before.

*LORD BRABOURNE: My Lords, before the head of the Government answers that question, I wish to say a few words—and a few only—at this stage. I think the House has some little reason to complain that, after the Amendments which have been adopted in Standing Committee, no longer time has been given to enable the House to become acquainted with the Amendments before having to consider the Report. But I do not wish to trouble myself with that point at present; the point upon which I do wish to trouble your Lordships for, I am afraid, a few seconds is this: The reference in Subsection 3, Clause 1, to the Tithe Rent-charge Act is in this manner—

> "Such sum shall be recoverable from the occupier by distress in like manner as is provided by Sections 81 and 85 of the Act of the Session of the sixth and seventh years of the reign of King William IV., chap. 71, and the enactments amending those sections, and not otherwise."

In the Bill as it went up to the Committee the words were "under the provisions of the Tithe Act, 1836." Now, the noble Marquess moved in Standing Committee to change that, and I want to point out two things: In the first place, in the Bill as it stands, other references are made to the original Act as the Tithe Act of 1836; and if you are going to refer to the Act in the present measure I cannot see why the reference to the Act cannot, in every instance, be couched in the same terms. It seems to me rather absurd to refer to the same Act in one form in one section of the Bill and in another form in another section. But I have something more to say. I have read in the ordinary channels of information that in the Standing Committee the noble Marquess said that his reason for the change of words was that he did not think it necessary to call the farmers' attention to the fact that it is tithe that is still being paid by them. Now, I humbly conceive that it is not only desirable, but just and fair, that this should be done. What, in the first place, are you, in fact, doing by this Bill? It has been represented that by this Bill you are giving something to the occupiers. You are doing no such thing. You are only forbidding the owner to pay the tithe in the manner which has been shown practically to be the most convenient. But, supposing a man is paying £40 a year for his farm, which would be worth £50 but for his contract to pay £10 to the tithe owner, you are now going to make the owner pay it. Do you mean the owner to be robbed to that extent or not? I presume the answer would be "Certainly not." What then, I ask, could be more fair than to provide by this Bill that he shall be allowed to keep it before his eyes, and before the eyes of the occupier, that it is still tithe rent-charge which is paid, only that he is to be compelled to pay it in that way instead of its being paid by the occupier as hitherto? I do not want to recapitulate the arguments I have already used against this Bill. I believe it to be a measure which will do a great deal of mischief; and that it will cause a great deal more friction between owners and occupiers than it will remove between clergymen and their parishioners. But now I would put it to your Lordships whether the plainest, most straightforward, and most honest proceeding is not this; As you are going to give the landlord power in such a case to obtain by distress £10 more from his tenant, because that sum of £10 is to be now paid by him which the tenant had hitherto undertaken to pay, would it not be better to say so? What you are doing, it is said, is not to rob the owner, but to remove friction between clergymen and their parishioners, and to facilitate the recovery of the tithe rent-charge. Well, if so, let us have a plain, straightforward reference to that object in a manner which will be understood by everybody. I will move, for form's sake, that the words after "as provided" in this subsection be left out; that is, from the words beginning "by sections," and so on, in line 26, to the end of the clause, and insert in their stead "as provided by the Tithe Act, 1836." That will restore the Bill to its original state, and make the reference to that Act the same as it was before, and is now in one or two other places, in the Bill.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, in answer to the noble Lord opposite, I must disclaim having made any promise at all, and therefore I must disclaim having been guilty of any breach of faith. I am very sorry if the noble Lord was misled by what I said on a previous occasion, or was induced not to speak against the clause or to take a Division on that occasion, or if any noble Lord has been inconvenienced by the Report having been brought up so soon; but I had no intention of any such result, and I must assert that I gave no promise, either on the Second Reading of the Bill or on the stage of Committee of the whole House, which has not been fulfilled. I certainly never gave any kind of promise that we would give the landlords access to the County Courts. I must equally repudiate the noble Lord's charge that we have given no reason for that policy. I do not mean to say that I think it would do any great harm; but undoubtedly, in strict logic, as we maintain that by this Bill we do not change the *status* of the occupier but merely change the relations of the tithe owner and the landowner, we are bound to take care that in no respect shall the occupier be in a worse position than he was before. A part of the advantages which he has enjoyed, or is supposed to have enjoyed, under the existing law is the precise limitation of the remedies by which the amount could be recovered from him. If we enlarge the number of those remedies and make the recovery of the debt, so far, more easy, we should to that extent have diminished the advantage of his position; and, therefore, upon the principle which we announced as the principle upon which the Bill is drawn, I think very strict justice required us not to give the landlords, in the words of my noble Friend, access to the County Courts. With respect to the point which has been raised by the noble Lord behind me, I cannot say that I think it is one of very great importance; but I maintain that the designation of the Act which I have given in this clause is the correct one. If you put the "Tithe Act" merely, you run a certain danger that ignorant persons will think that this money which the tenant owes to the landlord is still tithe. It will no longer be tithe: it will be a debt due from the occupier to the landlord, arising out of a previous covenant. It is no longer tithe, and I think it is undesirable that any mistake should exist upon that subject. I am not for a moment saying that it is a matter of serious importance, but I confess I think that the clause as it stands is in the most logical shape, and I should be disposed to adhere to it.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: My noble Friend who spoke at an earlier period of the discussion was, I think, under a misapprehension in reference to the words which occur in Clause 2, at line 5, that the County Court,

> "After such service on and hearing of the owner of the lands as may be prescribed, may order that the said sum or such part thereof as appears to the Court to be due together with the costs, be recovered in manner provided by this Act."

And then it goes on to say that the tithe shall not be recovered in any other manner. The effect of those words would, I think, be to render it essential that there should be a hearing; and I think it would be well to amend that. I cannot think that the criticism which was passed upon this clause was without some foundation, and I propose to strike out the words "and hearing" and to put in substitution for them—

> "And, after hearing the owner if he appears and desires to be heard"

The clause will then read thus—

> "After such service on the owner of the lands, as may be prescribed may, after hearing the owner if he appears and desires to be heard, order,"

and so on. It seems to me that will get rid of the difficulty, and will, at all events, I should think, not raise any controversy. We are all agreed as to what is intended to be done, and it really resolves itself into a question of drafting.

Amendment agreed to.

Verbal Amendments made.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 3 to 8 agreed to

Clause 9.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, I have an Amendment to move in this clause, at page 6, line 4 after the word "recoverable," to insert—

> "And if the court is satisfied that such remission has not been taken into account in estimating the rateable value of the tithe rent-charge, the court may remit such amount of any then current rate assessed on the owner of the tithe rent-charge as appears to the court to be proportionate to the amount of the remission of tithe rent-charge."

The object is to meet cases not of probable or of large injustice, but still of undoubted injustice such as that which was brought forward by the right rev. Prelate who presides over this Diocese during the Debate in Committee of the whole House. You give by one clause of the Bill power to the County Courts to decide that tithe in certain cases is not due, and it would be eminently unjust in those cases that the owners should pay rates upon that tithe. This clause is intended to remedy that defect.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I do not wish to raise an objection to the principle of the Amendment proposed; but I would wish to ask the noble Marquess whether there ought not to be a provision that the landowner should pay the amount. It may, I think, be stated in this way: there is so much owing out of the land; the landowner will, in certain cases, have to pay less to the tithe owner, and that of course increases the amount which the owner gets from the land, and, therefore, I think the landowner ought to pay the amount which the tithe owner would otherwise pay.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I do not know whether I may speak again, but it seems to me, with deference to the noble Lord, that the value of the land has so far been destroyed; and the value of the land having been destroyed there is no rate upon it, and there ought not to be any rate upon it. Therefore, the parish would have no more right to get it out of the landowner than to get it out of the tithe owner.

LORD HERSCHELL: I would only point out that the rate, such as it is, has been fixed upon the rateable value of the land under different circumstances. It may have been fixed upon the land in its condition of producing very little, and obviously if it has been so fixed the rate is perfectly right. Although you say the tithe owner is not to pay the whole of it, that does not make the rate wrong, because it may have been actually fixed with regard to the fact that the land has produced so little. Then there is one other point upon this which I should desire to call to the noble Marquess's attention. It treats the case as if the tithe owner must have been rated to the full amount unless the remission has been taken into account. But what had really happened might have been this: The remission might not have been taken into account, because the time for making it might not have come, but the tithe owner might have had his rateable value diminished because there was this power of remission. I think the noble Marquess will see in a moment how it will raise the rateable value, if any, if the tithe is obtained in this way, by simply enquiring what a tenant will give for it. If a tithe owner could show that he was entitled to tithe out of lands of such annual value as that the Court had power to deprive him of part of it, it is quite clear that the tenant would give less for it if those tithes were payable than before, and consequently the parson, or whoever the tithe owner might be, would get the remission because under the power of remission his rateable value ought to have been reduced below what it was before. Of course, if that has been done he ought not to get a further remission under those circumstances, because the fact of the remission has been already taken into account in fixing his rateable value.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: The noble and learned Lord has exerted his ingenuity to a very considerable extent, but perhaps I may suggest the word "deduction" instead of "remission." "Deduction" is, I think, capable of conveying both meanings.

LORD HERSCHELL: Or "that the provisions of this Act relating to deductions have been taken into account." If the noble Marquess will put it in that form that might be sufficient, but I would rather consider it before I make any further suggestion.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I had another Amendment in Clause 7, but I shall not move it now.

Clause 10.

*LORD THRING: The object of my Amendment upon this clause is to substitute a shorter, and I hope a clearer, definition for the definition which has been carried into the Bill by reference from the Act of 1836. My definition makes the owner in effect to be the person who receives the rents from the occupying tenant. I think it can do no harm whatever as the Act imposes no liability upon the owner. The only effect of this clause is to designate the owner as the person on whom service is to be made before proceedings can be taken in the County Courts. It is evidently exceedingly necessary that in a Bill which is to be carried into effect by County Court Judges, and in which clergymen and other persons not versed in legal technicalities are interested, the provisions should be couched in such a form, if possible that they can be "understanded of the vulgar." I rather thought the words in reference to the Act of 1836 might be unintelligible to most people, though in saying that I am subject to correction by my noble and learned Friend Lord Selborne, who says that he quite understands it. Still I think it is a clause not to be easily understood by ordinary intellects, and I trust, therefore, that your Lordships will accept this shorter form. I am sorry to say that the references are not quite right in the printed notice, but I have set them right in the Paper which I have given to the Lord Chancellor.

Amendment moved, in page 7, line 14, to leave out from "case" to end of paragraph and insert—

"means any person who shall be in actual possession or in receipt, or entitled to the receipt, of the rents and profits of land, and for the purposes of this Act the decision of the County Court as to who is the owner shall be conclusive."—(*Lord Thring.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Remaining clauses agreed to.

Schedule agreed to.

Bill to be read 3^a on Tuesday next, and to be printed as amended. (No. 60.)

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (BLIND AND DEAF) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 43.)

Read 3^a (according to order); amendments made; Bill passed and sent to the Commons.

REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN WRITS (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]

A Bill to make provisions in regard to the registration of certain writs in the divisions of the General Register of Sasines in Scotland—Was presented by the Lord Ker (*M. Lothian*); read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 61.)

ORDNANCE SURVEY—IRELAND.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF BELMORE, in rising to ask the Lord Privy Seal, with reference to the reply to a recent question as to the progress that is being made with the revision of the Ordnance Survey in Ireland, whether Her Majesty's Government will cause steps to be taken to hasten the completion of the survey on the 25in. scale, said: My Lords, about six weeks ago I asked my noble Friend below me a question about the progress that was being made with the Ordnance Survey in Ireland, and the answer I got from him was in effect that considerable progress had been made with two of the counties. One of those counties was Galway, a large county, and the other was Roscommon. Now, as there are 32 counties in Ireland, it stands to reason that progress at the rate of parts of two counties in a year is not very rapid, and that to complete the survey of Ireland on the 25in. scale, would at that rate take something like 20 years at least. This is a matter of very pressing importance, because we have now in full swing a system of land purchase by small occupiers, and we are likely to require the maps very shortly in view of the system of local registration and legal record of title under a Bill introduced in the other House. I have thought it well, therefore, to bring the matter again before Her Majesty's Government, and to ask whether it is possible in any way to hasten the completion of the survey on the 25in. scale.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK): My Lords, in the absence of my noble Friend the Lord Privy Seal, I beg to state that steps have already been taken to hasten the progress of the 25in. survey of Ireland by the creation of a new and additional Survey Division, and some of the surveyors of this division are already at work. To show the progress that has been made, I may state that the provision in the Estimates for revising the Irish survey was, in 1889-90 £15,750, in 1890-91 £25,200, and for this year 1891-92 it is £39,950.

HYDROPHOBIA AND SHEEP WORRYING.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*LORD STANLEY OF ALDERLEY, in rising to ask whether, in view of checking hydrophobia and sheep worrying, the Government would omit "cattle" as a ground of exemption from the dog licence, and so restrict exemptions on account of sheep, said: My Lords, I am very glad that my noble Friend the Lord President has undertaken to answer this question, because knowing as I did the illness of the Lord Privy Seal, it is a great relief to me that he has not ventured to come down to the House notwithstanding the increased clemency of the weather. It is hardly necessary for me to dwell much upon the danger of spreading hydrophobia being increased by a large number of vagrant ill-fed dogs. My noble Friend the Lord President will remember that once before in this House he stated that Anglesey was one of the worst counties in the Kingdom for hydrophobia: and there were about that time many more dogs than holdings in Anglesey. With regard to the worrying of sheep, complaints have appeared from time to time in the newspapers in various places, but last December some figures were published in the newspapers of North Wales of the destruction of sheep and lambs during two years, in seven parishes only, of Carnarvonshire. From these it appeared that 1,502 sheep and lambs had been killed or worried, causing a loss of £1,047, the value of the sheep, and a loss of £211 paid to watchers to protect them from their natural guardians, for such these dogs must be considered, being a total loss of £1,250 odd. Most of these dogs are exempted from duty on the ground of their attending "cattle" or sheep, "cattle" being a plural word, which is understood to mean two. There is a very prevalent belief in all parts of the country that there is great laxity on the part of the Excise officers in granting exemptions, but that is not the case. The fault lies, I think, in the wording of the Act, which left no discretion to the Excise, which allows any farmer to claim exemption for a certain number of dogs to attend or watch cattle or sheep. The consequence is that any tenant of four or five acres with two cows, and who is not properly speaking a farmer at all but a cottager, and who generally cannot afford to feed a dog properly, keeps an exempted dog. Cattle—cows especially—are much better without dogs coming near them. They have the greatest aversion to dogs, and the consequence of using these dogs is that the cows frequently drop their calves. Farmers in Scotland constantly get their milk curdled, from the cattle being pursued by collie dogs, in consequence of the agitation and alarm caused to the animals on that account. The only place where there is a good excuse for using dogs in connection with cattle is in the Highlands of Scotland, where the cattle roam over extensive unenclosed mountain tracts, but in these cases the herds were usually sufficiently numerous for their owners to be able to afford to pay for licences. The same thing may be said of sheep; it is not to be wondered at if so large a destruction of sheep has taken place in Carnarvonshire when it is remembered that a large number of these dogs are not sheep dogs at all, but lurchers, greyhounds, and mongrels of every description. The primary object of the Dog Duty at the present day is not so much revenue, as to prevent the undue multiplication of dogs; but this habit of exempting some dogs, which was only introduced in or since 1879, provides for the survival of the unfittest. The Dog Tax, your Lordships will remember, originated in the latter part of last century during the great war. It was proposed by a man named Dent, who got consequently the nick-name of "Dog-Dent," and it was so unpopular at first that he used to receive hampers with legs and tails of pheasants sticking out of them, but filled only with dead dogs. These exemptions give a vast amount of trouble at Somerset House and they cause, therefore, additional expense besides the loss of duty. In the County of Anglesey last year, 1,235 dogs paid duty, and 2,621 were exempted; in the seven parishes of Carnarvonshire, where this great loss of sheep occurred, 605 dogs were licensed, and 1,332 exempted, so that there were more than two dogs exempted for every dog that was licensed. In the Birmingham district, however, and its immediate neighbourhood, which is as your Lordships know, principally black country, there were only 384 dogs exempted on cattle farms—there are no sheep farms there—and as many as 11,573 dogs that paid duty. So that Birmingham stands very well both with regard to the vigilance of the Excise officers and the honesty of the pitmen who are very fond of their dogs, which sometimes it is said even get the children's milk and are supposed to be fed with mutton chops. I hope the Government will do something to check the increase of the number of dogs, which in 1878, before the exemptions were allowed, was 1,490,493. Calculating from the duty now paid, and assuming that the exemptions are upon much the same scale in all parts of the country the number of dogs would now amount to about 2,250,000. With regard to London I have not asked for the figures; but it is said that the Muzzling Order has had the effect of very much diminishing the number of dogs in and about London. What I ask upon the Notice Paper thefore, is, whether Her Majesty's Government will omit "cattle" tending as a ground for exemption of dogs from being licensed, and will restrict the exemptions on account of sheep. The simplest way, it seems to me, would be to abolish all exemptions, and if that cannot be done farmers might be defined and distinguished from cottagers, and dogs claiming exemption should be brought before the Excise officers, to show that they were *bonâ fide* sheep dogs.

VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: My Lords, I do not propose to enter upon the details into which my noble Friend has gone so fully. The fact is that the exemptions are regulated by an Act of Parliament. That Act of Parliament the Legislature has thought fit to pass, and I can only say that there is no intention on the part of the Government to take any steps for the repeal of that Act. As regards Birmingham, which my noble Friend mentioned, it is not likely that there would be any cases of sheep worrying there, because as he says there are no sheep dogs, and no sheep. If there were, farmers in the district would, probably, ask for exemptions for the purpose of taking care of them. I must point out that an Act of Parliament would be necessary to give effect to the proposed exemptions, but in view of the marked decrease in rabies consequent upon the Muzzling Regulations imposed by the Board of Agriculture, and that it appears unnecessary to impose a tax which would in other respects be injurious to the agricultural interest, the Government do not propose to make the exemptions suggested, or to alter those which at present exist.

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 12th March, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

SOUTHWARK AND VAUXHALL WATER BILL—(*by Order.*)

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): I desire, on behalf of the Southwark and Vauxhall Water Company, to say that this Bill is only one to raise additional capital for the purpose of constructing storage reservoirs and filter beds. If it is thought necessary by my right hon. Friend the President of the Local Government Board to send the Bill to the Hybrid Committee which is to sit on the general question of the Water Supply of the Metropolis, and not, as in an ordinary case, to a Select Committee, the company will offer no opposition.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed to the Select Committee on the London Water Commission Bill.

QUESTIONS.

JOHORE.

Mr. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether, in the year 1889, an intimation was given by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Johore Government that the Sultan should, if possible, arrange with the Singapore Government for the construction of a railway in the territory of Johore; and whether any railway concession was negotiated by the Crown Agents for the Colonies, acting under the direction of the Secretary of State, in substitution for a concession granted by the Sultan in April, 1888, to certain British subjects?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the COLONIES (Baron H. de Worms, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Sultan of Johore is an independent Ruler. The Secretary of State suggested that His Highness should, if he thought fit, confer with the Government of the Straits Settlements as to the line to be adopted for any railway constructed in his territory with a view to such line agreeing with the general system of railway communication established or contemplated in other States of the Malay Peninsula. The Crown Agents acted by the leave of, but not under instructions from, the Secretary of State in the conduct of the negotiations as to which they received instructions direct from the Sultan.

BRITISH INDIANS IN MOZAMBIQUE.

Mr. ALFRED PEASE (York): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government has received any information respecting the shipment of a number of Indian British subjects, who are reported to have been taken to Mozambique, at the end of 1889 or the beginning of 1890, by Portuguese, ostensibly to work upon railroads, but in reality to be enlisted as soldiers; or as to what has become of these men, some of whom are reported to have been ill-treated, flogged, and sent "up country," and not to have returned?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): Some British Indians were enlisted by the Portuguese in Goa and were sent to Mozambique in January, 1890. In consequence of reports that the enlistment was irregular inquiry was made by the Indian Government, who ascertained that there had been no misrepresentation in the conduct of the business, which was not illegal. The men are understood to be still in the Portuguese service, in which they would be liable to be moved about, but no Report has been received respecting them since their first arrival.

OPIUM SMOKING.

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I congratulate the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for India upon being sufficiently restored to health to be in his place. I beg to ask him if the Secretary of State has any information of the recent growth in India (apart from Burma) of the Chinese habit of opium smoking, as distinguished from the opium eating always practised to a limited extent in India and other countries; if so, whether any inquiry has been made regarding the alleged greater temptations and injuriousness of the new practice of smoking; and whether any special steps have been taken to limit and restrain houses for the smoking of opium, and check the practice; or, if information on this subject has not reached the Secretary of State, whether he will inquire of the Government of India?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In reply to the first question of the hon. Gentleman, I have to say that the Secretary of State has received no Reports which lead him to the belief that the practice of opium smoking, as distinguished from opium eating, is increasing. The reply to the second question of the hon. Gentleman is that special attention has been given to the subject in the North-West Provinces and Punjab, with the result that the number of licensed saloons has been greatly reduced.

In reply to a further question by Mr. S. SMITH (Flintshire),

SIR J. GORST said: I am afraid that I must deprecate the putting of questions upon this subject, which involve details, without notice.

INDIAN FACTORY ACT.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in the last few months, he has received deputations and communications from Lancashire Members on the subject of the Amendment of the Indian Factory Act, and Her Majesty's Government have consequently urged the demands of those Members on the Government of India; and if the Correspondence so occasioned, subsequent to the Despatches on the Berlin Conference already laid upon the Table, can be produced now that the Government of India has submitted a Bill to the Indian Legislature?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The only communiation I have had was with the hon. Member for Oldham (Mr. Maclean), when I answered his question some time ago. To the best of my recollection, he asked me to answer a question which he had placed on the Paper, and I begged him to postpone it in order that I might transmit the question to India and obtain a reply. There is no Correspondence on the subject which I am able to produce.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Is there any truth in the paragraph which appears in the *Times* this morning, to the effect that certain parts of the Bill have been presented to the Indian Legislature, contrary to the pledges given to the Imperial Parliament, and have not been accepted?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am not aware whether there is any truth in that statement or not. The hon. Member has not given me notice of the question, or I would have informed myself.

THE AMENDED INDIA FACTORY ACT.

MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether Her Majesty's Government will instruct the Government of India, in framing the amended India Factory Act, to accord the same protection to the working classes of India that has been granted by the English Factory and Workshop Act to the working classes of this country?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON (for Sir J. GORST): I must refer the hon. Member to the statement made on this subject by the First Lord of the Treasury on the 17th of February, to which the Secretary of State has nothing to add.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): As the Under Secretary for India is not in his place at this moment, perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will be able to say what remissions, if any, were made by the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Province of Oudh to the State tenants in 1887-8, when the average price of food was more than one-third higher than the average of the six preceding years; and whether he can state how far there is any connection between the high prices ruling in 1887-8 and the fact that the recorded death rate in India in that year was the highest known?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I am afraid that I cannot reply to these questions without notice. As the hon. Member knows, I am not answerable for Indian questions.

STILL-BORN CHILDREN.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the statement published by Dr. Robert R. Rentoul, of Liverpool, to the effect that he had ascertained by inquiry, that during the year 1889, 6,321 "still-born" children were interred in 71 Burial Board cemeteries; that there are 1,100 Board cemeteries in

England; and that the larger number of such interments take place in parish churchyards; whether he could present to Parliament a Return of the total number of infants interred as still-born in all England in 1890; and whether it would be possible in such Return to show the proportion of such infants born respectively in and out of wedlock.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): My attention had not previously been called to the statements which have been published by Dr. Rentoul. The births of still-born children are not registered by the Registrars of Births and Deaths, and consequently no Returns of these births are made to the Registrar General. I am, therefore, not in a position to give a Return of the number of infants interred as still-born in 1890, nor to state what proportion of these infants were born respectively in and out of wedlock.

In reply to a further question by Dr. CAMERON,

*MR. RITCHIE said: If the hon. Member will put down the Return he would like to have, I shall be glad to consider whether it can be given.

YELVERTOFT EDUCATIONAL CHARITY.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther), as a Charity Commissioner, whether he is aware that, although under a scheme of the 9th February, 1883, for regulating the Yelvertoft Educational Charity, as varied by a scheme of the 21st February, 1890, the Trustees may let the building formerly used as a school, and are directed to appropriate the same, if not let, for the promotion of the education, instruction, or recreation of the poorer inhabitants of Yelvertoft, this building has not been let and is not appropriated as directed, but is only used once a week for the practice of the church choir; whether he is aware that, although by the scheme the Trustees are empowered to make payments for children resident in Yelvertoft so long as they attend a public elementary school and satisfy the Trustees as to regularity in attendance, in January, 1891, the Trustees paid 30s. to a girl who did not attend a public elementary school between 22nd September and 10th November, 1890, and has not attended since 8th December, 1890; whether complaints have reached him that no teacher or child attending a Nonconformist Sunday School has ever received any payment for religious teaching, but that children attending the Church Sunday School receive prizes from the Trustees every year, and that the teacher in such school receives £10 a year out of the net annual income of the Charity of about £25; whether the Trustees have, in accordance with the request which was made to them by the Commissioners some weeks ago, sent in the accounts of the Charity for 1890; and whether the Commissioners will direct a public inquiry at Yelvertoft by one of their Inspectors?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The Commissioners are informed that the old school-room of the Yelvertoft Educational Charity is regularly used for Sunday School, and also has for a considerable time been used as a parish reading-room, and for other purposes, including choir practice and vestry meetings. Permission to use the building has never been refused. As to the second paragraph—

> "Whether, although the Trustees are empowered to make payments for children resident in Yelvertoft so long as they attend a public elementary school, and satisfy the Trustees as to regularity and attendance, in January, 1891, the Trustees paid 30s. to a girl who did not attend a public elementary school between September 22 and November 10, 1890, and has not attended since December 8, 1890"—

no such payment as that mentioned was made in January, 1891; but in December, 1890, a payment was made by the Trustees to the only child in the Board School who was qualified under Clause 31 (*b*.) of the scheme for the school-year ending March 31, 1890. No definite complaints have been received respecting the payments for teachers or children for the promotion of instruction in religious knowledge. The accounts for 1890 have now been received. Should it appear desirable in the course of communication, the Commissioners are prepared to direct a local inquiry by an Assistant Commissioner.

HALF-TIMERS IN FACTORIES.

MR. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he has inquired into the alleged cases recently brought to his notice of interference on the part of employers in and about Rochdale, Stockport, and Oldham, with the right of the parents of half-timers in factories to choose the school which their children shall attend; and whether he will now state the results of his inquiry?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I have received a Report from the Inspector of the Rochdale and Oldham district confirming the substantial accuracy of the hon. Member's allegations. The reasons given in one case were that the school selected was one to which the firm had largely contributed, and that the requirement was necessary in order to secure discipline in the works and uniformity in keeping the time-books required under the Factory Acts; but how far this may be so I have no means of judging, nor have I any power on behalf of the Department to interfere, as there is nothing in the Education Acts to prevent an employer making attendance at a particular school a condition of employment in his factory.

MR. PICTON: Are not some of the schools largely maintained by the employers, who force the children to attend them? May I ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will use the power of the Department to withhold grants from managers who openly defy the law? Does he not remember, in answer to a former question, stating that the parents of the half-timers had a right to choose the school which their children should attend?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: I do not think I can use the power of the Department to withhold grants. I do not think that under the Education Act I have the power to do that. I doubt whether the Department has the least power in the matter.

MR. PICTON: Are not some of these schools maintained by the Education Department, and could not the Department exercise power in regard to them?

*SIR W. HART DYKE: I will inquire further into the matter. It is one of extreme difficulty. I have already gone into it carefully, as far as I can, and I have stated candidly, as far as I am able, the precise legal position which the Department occupies.

STEEL FORGINGS IN ORDNANCE FACTORIES.

MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what proportion of steel forgings are now produced in Government Departments, as compared with those supplied by public contract?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): In 1890 the steel forgings produced in the ordnance factories were 22½ per cent. of the whole supply.

ALLEGED MASSACRE IN MADAGASCAR.

MR. SAMUEL SMITH: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government has received any particulars of the massacre and outrage in Madagascar, reported in the French paper *Le Temps*, with further details in the *Times* of the 6th inst., quoted from the *Madagascar News;* and, if so, whether Her Majesty's Government has communicated with that of France in order to insure the punishment of the perpetrators of the outrage, and prevent the recurrence of such misdeeds in the future?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: No official information on the subject has been received. There is no warrant for the interference of Her Majesty's Government, as it is not asserted that British subjects were injured. According to the newspaper reports, the persons implicated were to be immediately brought to trial.

SALE OF POSTAGE STAMPS BY PUBLICANS.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will give such instructions as will prevent the enforcement of penalties against publicans and tradesmen who oblige their customers by selling them postage stamps after post offices are closed?

A LORD OF THE TREASURY (Sir HERBERT MAXWELL, Wigton): I do not think it necessary to give any instructions as to the enforcement of penalties against publicans and others who sell postage stamps to their customers after post offices are closed.

MR. COBB: Is the hon. Baronet aware that several publicans have been annoyed by the proceedings which officials have taken; and that, although shopkeepers are allowed to have licences for the sale of stamps on application, publicans are always refused?

SIR H. MAXWELL: I will inquire further whether licences to sell stamps are refused to publicans, and I will communicate with the hon. Member.

ARMY PRIZE MONEY.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to a published statement that the Army Prize Money and Legacy Funds for the year ending 31st March, 1890, amounted to £103,147; that out of this sum only £14 14s. was paid on account of prize shares to soldiers and their representatives, the cost of distributing which was £299 5s.; and whether, seeing that the claims on these funds are so small, he will consider whether the interest upon them could be beneficially applied to distressed Crimean veterans not in receipt of pensions who are now in danger of becoming paupers?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I can only say at present that the question is under consideration whether any portion of this money can be devoted to the purpose mentioned by the hon. Member.

BOARDING OUT PAUPER CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND.

MR. LENG: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it is any part of the duty of the Inspectors of the Board of Supervision in Scotland to superintend the system of boarding out pauper children by Parochial Boards, and to report on the fitness of the Guardians selected, and the sufficiency and sanitary condition of the houses in which the children are boarded; and whether, if this has not been attended to hitherto, he will bring the subject under the notice of the Board with the view of securing that the condition of pauper children so boarded out shall be regularly reported upon?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): It cannot be said that it is part of the duty of the Board of Supervision's officers to superintend the boarding out of pauper children, though, as a matter of fact, they do make inquiry for the purpose of satisfying themselves that such children are being properly taken care of, when there is a suitable opportunity for doing so. There are, however, serious objections to a system by which the Board's Inspectors should be required to exercise a constant supervision over boarded-out children. I may add that the larger Parochial Boards have special officers to visit boarded-out children and make periodical reports.

DEATH FROM VACCINATION.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the case of Mr. Punshon, of 37, Darwin Street, Old Kent Road, S.E., whose infant child is medically certified to have died on 26th February from blood poisoning, from vaccination performed by a public vaccinator; and whether he has directed an inquiry to be made into this case; if so, with what result; if not, whether it is his intention to direct that such inquiry be held by his Department?

MR. RITCHIE: I have received a copy of the entry in the register of deaths in the case of the child referred to. The cause of death, as certified by the medical man, was vaccinia and pyæmia. The case has been brought under the attention of the Royal Commission on Vaccination, and it is, I understand, to be investigated by one of the medical men employed by the Commission for such inquiries.

INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS BILL.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, with the Memorandum of data and reasons for the Inflammable Liquids Bill, he will give the Memorials from Public Authorities referred to by him on Monday, 9th March?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; the Memorandum in question will contain, as far as possible, the Memorials referred to.

INTIMIDATION.

Mr. COLMAN (Norwich): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the sentences of one month and 14 days' imprisonment with hard labour passed by the Norwich Magistrates on the 27th ultimo upon Arthur Shingles and James Wright, respectively, for intimidation; whether it is usual in this class of offences to impose fines; and whether he will communicate with the Magistrates referred to, and advise the liberation of the prisoners?

Mr. MATTHEWS: Yes, Sir; I have received a Report from the Justices as to these cases, and also a copy of the evidence. It depends upon the circumstances of each case whether the offence can be adequately punished by the infliction of a fine. In previous cases in the City of Norwich the Magistrates had imposed fines; but finding that these sentences had not had a deterrent effect they were of opinion that a sentence of imprisonment was necessary for the protection of individuals and for the general peace of the city. The sentence in the case of Wright has already all but expired, and I should not be justified in advising any interference with the sentence on Shingles, whose offence was clearly proved.

SCOTCH SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether a person who is entered in the Valuation Roll as tenant but not as occupier, where no occupier is entered nor the premises marked "empty," is entitled to vote at a School Board election in Scotland?

***Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON**: Under Section 1 of the Valuation Act of 1854 it is expressly provided that the Valuation Roll shall set forth in the case of all lands and heritages the names and designations—

> "Where there are tenants or occupiers, of the tenants and of the occupiers thereof respectively."

I am unwilling to assume that in any case this plain statutory duty has been neglected, and that no name has been entered in the column for occupiers in the case of any occupied property. But if such neglect has occurred I am unable to say that any person, whose name is not entered on the Valuation Roll as an occupier, can vote in that character at a School Board Election.

TELEGRAPH BRANCH AT NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

Mr. BURT (Morpeth): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will state why supervising duties in the telegraph branch at Newcastle-upon-Tyne are to continue to be performed under the proposed revision by clerks on a scale of £140 rising to £170 per annum, whilst in the local postal branch similar duties are provided for by the appointment of assistant superintendents (second class) on a scale rising from £170 to £200, and in offices already revised by assistant superintendents (second class) on a scale of £200 to £260 per annum; and whether he will take steps for remedying the grievances complained of?

***The POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. Raikes, Cambridge University): The hon. Member is not correct in stating that the duties in the one case which he mentions are similar to the duties in the other. There is much difference between them in importance and responsibility, and hence the difference in pay. I have, with the sanction of the Treasury, just revised the entire office at Newcastle, and I am not prepared to alter the decision. I may add that the "clerks" on the telegraph side and on the postal side at Newcastle get precisely the same salaries, namely, £140, by £6, to £170.

THE SAVINGS BANK DEPARTMENT.

Mr. JOHN KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, in view of the fact that the Treasury has sanctioned the payment of overtime in the Telegraph Department at time and a quarter for work performed after eight hours' employment, he is prepared to recommend that the clerks of the Savings Bank Department, who are compulsorily working overtime beyond eight hours a day, should be paid at a similar rate; and, if not, whether he can state the length of time which must elapse before he can propose to issue instructions that these clerks should not be compelled to work beyond the eight hours a day?

*Mr. RAIKES: My answer to the first part of the hon. Member's question is in the negative. As regards the second part of the question, I hope to reduce the hours of work of the officers referred to soon after Easter.

HOURS OF LABOUR OF RAILWAY SERVANTS.

Mr. CHANNING: I had intended to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the evidence at the inquest on George Wells, a platelayer of the North London Railway Company, who was killed at Highbury Station at 9 a.m. on 6th February, from which it appears that Wells came on duty at 9 a.m. on 5th February, worked till 5.30 p.m., resumed duty at 11 p.m. on the 5th, and would, if he had not been killed, have continued on duty till 5.30 p.m. on the 6th, and thus was on duty no less than 21½ hours, divided by an interval of only 5½ hours' rest, up to the time of his death, and would, if the accident had not occurred, have been on duty for 30 hours, with an interval of only 5½ hours; and whether the Board of Trade have made representations to the North London Railway Company, with a view to the prevention of such excessive hours of work? At the request of the right hon. Baronet I beg to postpone the question.

PROSECUTIONS UNDER THE SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.

Mr. HERBERT GLADSTONE (Leeds, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the case of "Police *v.* Cannon," in January last, at Barrow, by which great inconvenience was caused to the defendant and the Cambrian Vinegar Company of Leeds; whether the prosecution was based entirely upon the analysis of the Barrow Borough Analyst, which was proved to be erroneous; and whether he will consider the advisability of amending "The Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875," by providing that no legal proceedings shall be taken under Clause 20 upon a single unsupported analysis?

Mr. RITCHIE: My attention had not been directed to the case of "Police *v.* Cannon" prior to the notice given by the hon. Member. I have made inquiry as to the facts, and I find that proceedings were instituted against the defendant with reference to the sale of certain vinegar. The proceedings were instituted entirely upon the analysis of the sample by the public analyst of the borough. The vinegar was considered by him to be adulterated with 22·4 per cent. of water. The Magistrates deemed it desirable to cause a sample to be analysed by the chemical officers of the Inland Revenue Department. The conclusion at which those officers arrived was that the sample was genuine commercial vinegar of low quality and the Magistrates dismissed the case. As regards the question of legislation, I am not prepared to propose that no legal proceedings should be taken under Section 20 of "The Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1875," upon a single unsupported analysis. Section 22 already gives power to the Justices before whom any complaint is made under the Act, upon the request of either party, to cause an analysis to be made by the chemical officers of the Inland Revenue Department of the article of food alleged to be sold in contravention of the Act and to obtain a certificate as to the result. This power was conferred upon the Justices to enable them to obtain an independent analysis whenever the circumstances appear to require it.

THE LATE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

Mr. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will inquire from the Coroner for Westminster and state if, in the case of the late Duke of Bedford, the deceased was described in the inquisition by the same names as in the certificate of the finding of the jury, under the 16th section of the Registration Act of 1874; whether it is usual for the jurors to sign the inquisition in blank, or only partly filled up, and to fill it up after the jury have signed it; and if, in this case, the inquisition was filled up before signing by the jury?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Coroner that the answer to the first paragraph is in the affirmative. It is usual for the jury to sign the inquisition partly filled up, the particulars having been previously endorsed. This practice was not departed from on this occasion.

NAVAL UNIFORMS.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can state what was decided by the Committee on Naval Uniforms, and what action it is intended to be taken on them?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The Report of the Committee has been received, and the action to be taken upon it is now under consideration.

SUPERIOR OFFICERS OF POST OFFICES.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General when the revised scheme, affecting the superior officers of the post offices in the towns mentioned in a question put to the right hon. Gentleman by the late Mr. Bradlaugh, will come into force; and whether it is intended to make its action retrospective?

*MR. RAIKES: This matter is being closely examined by the Treasury, and that Department is dealing with the various cases in batches and proceeding with the work, which is very laborious, as it comes before it. The decision on the point referred to in the last paragraph of the hon. Gentleman's question, as indeed on all those involved, rests with the Treasury.

STOCKTAKING IN THE ORDNANCE FACTORY.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in regard to the stock in the Ordnance Factory, referred to by Sir Charles Ryan in the revised Report on Public Accounts, complete stocktaking is effected punctually; and, if so, at what periods?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Stocktaking is continuously carried out in the Ordnance Factories, so that agreement between the stock and the ledger accounts is arrived at in sections. It would interfere too greatly with current work and would require too large a staff to take the whole stock at any one period.

THE TRANSVAAL.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Her Majesty's Government perseveres with the policy of that part of the Swaziland Convention, by which the Transvaal was required, as the price of certain advantages, to enter the highly protective Customs Union of the Cape Colony; whether, in that case, Natal must either submit to a double tariff on the trade with the Transvaal by way of Natal, or must also enter the Cape Union, and abandon its more Free Trade policy; and whether Her Majesty's Government has thought it desirable thus to favour Protection at the expense of Free Trade?

BARON H. DE WORMS: Her Majesty's Government adhere to all the provisions of the Convention into which they have recently entered. In the event of the South African Republic joining the South African Customs Union, it would collect duties on goods imported by way of Natal at the Union rates. In that event, it would be entirely a question for the Natal Legislature whether it should continue to apply the present Natal Tariff to general goods merely passing through Natal for consumption in the Transvaal, or grant the exemptions in respect of them already enjoyed by spirits, wines, tea, and manufactured tobacco, or whether it should join the Union itself. The Customs Union Tariff is a Revenue, and not a Protective Tariff, and the question of "Protection" *versus* "Free Trade" does not appear to be involved.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: The Cape Tariff is a high tariff, while that of Natal is a low tariff. There is a great discrepancy between the two.

POSITION OF MR. JOHNSTON IN AFRICA.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what is the official position of Mr. Johnston in African territories north of the Zambesi; whether he is an ordinary Consul; and whether he is to be, as stated in the *Times* of 6th March, practically Governor, assisted by a staff of officers, and by funds supplied to him by the South Africa Company?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Mr. Johnston is Commissioner and Consul General. An ordinary Consul is stationed in a foreign country from the Government of which he receives an exequatur. Mr.

Johnston, being in territory under British influence, is consequently not an ordinary Consul. It would be erroneous to describe him as Governor. His duties will be to conciliate the chiefs, develop trade, and bring the territories gradually under British administration. He will have a certain number of subordinates. The South Africa Company will contribute a sum for the maintenance of a police force.

ARMY AND NAVY SERVICES.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return showing the amount actually expended on Army Services, outside the moneys voted by the House of Commons, for the services of the current year, and what is the amount intended to be similarly expended during the coming year outside the Estimates presented to this House? I beg also to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return showing the amount actually expended on Navy Services, outside the sums voted by the House of Commons, for the service of the current year, and also showing the amount to be similarly expended during the coming year outside the Estimates presented to this House?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: In answer to these questions, I have to say that the information is being prepared and will be laid upon the Table.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will it be laid on the Table in the course of next week?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Yes, Sir; I think so.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Can the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer say whether it will be laid on the Table in the course of a week or two?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Yes, Sir; I think so.

VOLUNTEER BATTALIONS.

MR. SPENCER BALFOUR (Burnley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can explain the reason why the actual time occupied by Volunteer battalions in proceeding to and from regimental camps is not counted as part of the full day of 24 hours for which regimental camp allowance is granted; and whether, having regard to the distances travelled and the expenses incurred by Volunteer battalions going into regimental camps, it is possible to allow such time to be so counted, particularly having regard to the fact the time so occupied would not be available for military training in camp?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The time referred to is not allowed in the case of a regimental camp; but it is allowed in another form for a brigade camp. The distinction was deliberately made to encourage the formation of brigade camps, which are of much more value for purposes of military training than regimental camps.

TRANSMISSION OF SINGLE LETTERS BY RAIL.

MR. SPENCER BALFOUR: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will take steps to give greater general publicity, by means of notices in Post Offices and in the Public Press, to the important arrangements recently concluded with the Railway Companies for the independent transmission of single letters by rail?

*MR. RAIKES: I am glad to have anticipated the suggestion of the hon. Member, for a notice relating to the arrangements referred to is now being exhibited at every Post Office, and copies of it have been furnished to the Press, both metropolitan and provincial.

THE PRIVATE BILL OFFICE.

SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the fees paid to the Private Bill Office of the two Houses of Parliament are on an average about £27,000 annually in excess of the cost of the Private Bill Office; and what is done with the balance?

SIR H. MAXWELL: I believe the figure stated by the hon. Baronet may be taken as approximately correct. The fees on Private Bills go into the Exchequer.

EMPLOYMENT OF KURDISH AND CIRCASSIAN TROOPS BY THE PORTE.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention has been drawn to the statement in various Turkish journals, copied into the *Daily News* and *Le Temps*, that Kurdish chieftains have been summoned to Constantinople, and that the Porte has decided to form regiments of Kurds and Circassians; that these troops are to be named "Ertogrul;" whether Her Majesty's Government will use their utmost endeavours to prevent the formation of such regiments; and whether the formation of Kurdish regiments infringes the provisions of Article 61 of the Berlin Treaty, wherein it is stated that the Porte is to protect the Armenians against the Kurds and Circassians?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government are aware that a project to form regiments of Kurdish Militia or Yeomanry is under the consideration of the Porte. The experiment would be watched with some anxiety, but it may be, on the other hand, that the disciplining and organising the tribesmen might have a restraining effect upon their irregular propensities. If judiciously carried out it would not violate, but would fulfil, the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin; and there is at present no ground for the intervention of Her Majesty's Government.

LIVERPOOL GENERAL POST OFFICE.

MR. W. F. LAWRENCE (Liverpool, Abercromby): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that Sunday labour is performed in the General Post Office, Liverpool, by stampers and sorting postmen, without any remuneration; and whether, having regard to his statement in the House in August last, he will see that in future such labour shall be paid for?

*MR. RAIKES: The remuneration for duties performed on Sunday at Liverpool and other provincial offices by Post Office servants of the class referred to, is at present given in their ordinary weekly wages. The question whether extra remuneration shall be granted for these duties is now under consideration.

DOG-MUZZLING IN BOURNEMOUTH.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether the Dog-Muzzling Order now in force in Bournemouth and surrounding district will soon be dispensed with; and for what reason is the Act kept in force in winter in this very healthy place?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I am afraid that I cannot dispense with the Muzzling Order at present at Bournemouth. It is kept in force during the winter in what the hon. Member describes, very accurately I have no doubt, as "that very healthy place," because two cases have occurred there since the winter commenced, one of them having occurred so lately as the end of January or the beginning of last month. In reply to a further question as to what proof there was of disease—I am unable to answer that question in these two particular cases without notice. Usually, I believe, the carcases of these animals undergo examination, and some of them are sent to London—I believe to the Royal Veterinary College for the purpose.

DR. TANNER: What proofs has the right hon. Gentleman in regard to these alleged cases of rabies?

MR. CHAPLIN: I cannot answer that question without notice; but I may say that the great majority of cases were inquired into by a member of the Veterinary College.

DR. TANNER: I will put a further question on the subject

FEES ON PROBATES AND LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Court fees fixed in 1874, in respect to Probates and Letters of Administration, by Sir James Hannen, with the concurrence of the then Lord Chancellor and the Lord Chief Justice, under the provisions of an Act of Parliament, and approved of by the Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasury, have been altered by the Senior Registrar so that the said fees are now paid on net instead of on gross amount; and whether this alteration involves a loss to the Revenue?

MR. GOSCHEN: Under the Table of Fees fixed in 1874 the *ad valorem* fees are governed entirely by the amount of Stamp Duty payable, the fees being, in fact, a percentage on the duty. Consequently, when the Stamp Duty was assessed by the Customs and Inland Revenue Act of 1881 on the net instead of on the gross value, in certain cases, a corresponding reduction was made in the fees.

CONVEYANCE OF DISTINGUISHED PERSONAGES.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any payments have been made within the past 12 months for the hire of steamers between Great Britain and the Continent for the conveyance of distinguished personages; and, if so, under what Vote of Supply have they been included?

SIR H. MAXWELL: No payments have been made within the past 12 months from voted money for the hire of steamers between Great Britain and the Continent for the conveyance of distinguished personages.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Have any bills been incurred for the conveyance of distinguished persons to and from the Continent? These sums used to appear on the Estimates; and, as the hon. Baronet says that no payments have been made in this respect with voted money, I wish to know from what sources the payments have been defrayed?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: No charge whatever has fallen upon the Estimates or the Votes of Parliament for these purposes. There has been no charge whatever upon the taxpayer for the conveyance of distinguished personages to and from the Continent during the past 12 months.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether any allowance is given to Commanders of Her Majesty's ships whenever personages, not in the Civil or Military Service of Her Majesty, are conveyed on such ships; whether any such personages have been conveyed on Her Majesty's ships during the last 12 months; whether, if any such personages have been conveyed, he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return stating the names of such personages, the occasions on which they have been conveyed, and the amounts paid; and whether he will say, if such personages have been conveyed, under what Vote of Supply, and under what sub-head, the amounts thus paid have been included?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: Allowances are given to officers commanding Her Majesty's ships when they are put to expense in the entertainment of personages, whom they, in the execution of their duty, are conveying from one place to another. During the year 1890 there were two instances of entertainment of this kind, namely, that of the King of Tonga and suite, who were received on board Her Majesty's ship *Rapid*, on July 11th, 1890, and the cost, £6 10s., is in course of recovery from the Colonial Office; and that of the Rev. A. Brittain, who volunteered his services as an interpreter on the occasion of the visit of Her Majesty's ship *Royalist* to the New Hebrides, and who was received on board that ship from the 23rd to the 28th of January, 1890, inclusive, at a cost of £3 12s. (12s. a day), which amount was charged to Navy Vote II., sub-head Z, "Miscellaneous payments," to which the cost of interpreters is usually charged.

NEWFOUNDLAND GOVERNMENT LOAN.

MR. ATKINSON (Boston): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if it is true that Her Majesty's Government will guarantee a Newfoundland Government Loan of £2,000,000, or any other amount; and, if so, at what rate, and on what terms?

MR. GOSCHEN: The Government of Newfoundland have been informed that under certain circumstances and conditions Her Majesty's Government would be prepared to meet their wish that an Imperial guarantee should be given on a loan raised for railway and analogous purposes; but I am unable to make any statement as to terms. The matter has not reached any definite shape.

THE COMMITTEE ON LIGHT DUES.

MR. ATKINSON: I had intended to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will let the Committee on the Incidence of Light Dues meet, without any longer seeking to bind the ship-owning Members to give up their conviction that Light Dues should fall on the Consolidated Fund, in accordance with the recommendation of Select Committees of this House? but at the request of the right hon. Gentleman I will postpone the question until Monday.

BRUSSELS ACT.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether it is true that the Government of the United States has refused to ratify the General Act; and what effect, if any, such refusal would have upon the carrying out of that Act?

Sir J. FERGUSSON: The Senate has not ratified the Act. The effect of that refusal is not a matter upon which Her Majesty's Government can express an opinion.

EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY BILL.

Mr. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he proposes to introduce and circulate the Employers' Liability Bill?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I propose to introduce the Bill as soon as the progress of Public Business is such as to enable me to proceed with it effectually.

COUNTY COURT SITTINGS.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether his attention has been called to the Return of Sittings of County Courts recently presented to the House, from which it appears that 11 of the County Court Judges held less than 120 sittings during the year 1889; and whether any steps will be taken to put in force the 10th and 13th sections of "The County Court Act, 1888," so as to secure more frequent sittings of the Courts for the benefit of the suitors, and to provide for a redistribution of judicial work among the Judges?

*The ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. Webster, Isle of Wight): The figures given by the right hon. Gentleman regarding the number of sittings are substantially correct. I am informed by the Lord Chancellor that Orders are from time to time made under Section 10 of the County Courts Act, 1888, and every attempt is made in order to secure that the sittings shall be as full as possible. In many cases where a small number of sittings occur the time occupied by travelling is very heavy, and I am informed that this is the case in the instances contemplated by the right hon. Gentleman's question.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: Will the Orders referred to be laid on the Table?

*Sir R. WEBSTER: I understand there will be no objection to a Return in order to see what the exact number of sittings is and the time occupied by the County Court Judges.

PUBLIC BUSINESS AND THE EASTER HOLIDAYS.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, for the convenience of Members, he will now indicate the date and duration of the Adjournment at Easter?

Mr. HOWORTH (Salford, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the continual counts which have taken place on Private Members' nights recently, and of the general anxiety that the Session should not be prolonged beyond July, Her Majesty's Government will favourably consider the widespread wish that the nights thus wasted should be appropriated to Government business?

Mr. JOHNSTON (Belfast, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in consideration of the fact that the Census of the United Kingdom is to be taken on Sunday, 5th April, he will include that date in the Easter Holidays in order that Members may be enumerated in their own houses?

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): May I ask whether, in view of the fact that the "counts out" during the present Session have almost wholly, and certainly by far the larger number, taken place on Friday nights, and also of the fact that Friday night is a night on which the Government, by long-established and well-understood usage, have always been under the obligation of keeping a House, the right hon. Gentleman will take increased means for the fulfilment of that obligation?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for enforcing upon me the duties of Her Majesty's Government. No one is better able than the right hon. Gentleman to recall to the consideration of any Government the duties which devolve upon it. I think, however, that, if the right hon. Gentleman will make a careful investigation of the circumstances relating to the "counts out" to which he refers, he will find that Her Majesty's Government have not been very deficient in the discharge of their duties. [" Oh, oh ! "] Hon. Members opposite have shown so little interest in the question that was being discussed at the time that they gave no assistance to Her Majesty's Government in their endeavours to keep a House. The hon. Member for the Rushcliffe Division (Mr. J. E. Ellis) asks a question which is of interest to hon. Members generally, and I should have been extremely glad had I been able at the moment to give some definite information with respect to it. [" Oh, oh ! "] The hon. Member will, I am sure, acknowledge that the ground on which I am not able to give definite information is a sufficiently reasonable one, and that is before the date of the holidays can be fixed Supply must be obtained and Ways and Means advanced. [Mr. LABOUCHERE : Vote on Account.] The Vote on Account is, of course, included in Supply, and this must be taken by the 16th of March in order to enable the House to rise for the Easter holidays. The intention was to move the Adjournment on Thursday, the 26th March, but I recognise the fact that representations have been made to the effect that there is a strong desire that the ancient practice should be observed and the House rise on Tuesday. In these circumstances I shall ask the House on Monday to give the Government Morning Sittings for the transaction of Public Business on Tuesdays and Fridays. The House has now been sitting for a considerable period, and there remains a large amount of public work to be got through. A review of the conditions under which Tuesday and Friday Sittings have been used by hon. Members leads me to believe that a Sitting of four hours, from 9 o'clock to 1 o'clock, would afford them all the time that they really desire for Debate. I am sure that the view which the hon. Member for Salford (Mr. Howorth) presses on the consideration of the Government is entertained largely on this side of the House — a desire that there should be an early Prorogation this year at all events, having regard to the fact that the business of the House began at a much earlier period than usual. I have referred to Supply in order to ask the House to recognise the necessity of agreeing to the Supplementary Estimates before it in the course of this evening, and the Vote on Account not later than Monday. In order that the House may rise on Tuesday, the 24th of March, I have laid the circumstances before it, and I have no doubt that it will take the subject into consideration and give assistance to the Government to carry on the business. As to the duration of the holiday, the hon. Member for Belfast (Mr. Johnston) has urged a new ground for its extension. I do not know whether that view will be entertained generally by hon. Members; but, having regard to the circumstances of the case, if the Government were able to obtain the assistance of the House in the matter of Morning Sittings, and if they were able to complete Supply on the day I have named, I shall propose that the Adjournment be from Tuesday, the 24th, until Monday, the 6th of April.

Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE: What business will be taken at the Morning Sittings of Tuesday and Friday, and what constitutes the special reasons for having Morning Sittings on those days?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The state of public business constitutes the reasons for having Morning Sittings on those days. There are also several measures which the Government are anxious to send to the Standing Committees, among them being the Public Health Bill and the Savings Banks Bill, and we also wish to make progress with the Public Trustee Bill. The Government desire to deal with those measures in order as soon as possible to enter on the consideration of the Irish Land Purchase Bill.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): Will the Civil Service Estimates be taken this side of Easter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I think it improbable that we shall be able to take them. There is the Tithe Bill, which will come down from the House of Lords, and we shall desire, if possible, to take the judgment of the House on the Amendments which the House of Lords have introduced.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Will the Irish Land Bill be the first business after Easter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I hope so.

Dr. TANNER: May I ask, with reference to the " counts out," whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that on Tuesday last there were several Members of Her Majesty's Government in the Lobby while the House was being counted, including the Civil Lord of the Admiralty and several junior Lords of the Treasury?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir.

DR. TANNER: It is a fact.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): Will the Tithe Bill be taken before the Adjournment?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope we shall be able to do so, as it is desirable that we should part with that subject before Easter.

MR. COBB: Will the Inflammable Liquids Bill be taken before Easter?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It will not be taken.

In reply to Colonel WARING (Down, N.),

*MR. W. H. SMITH said: On the first day after the holidays, Supply will be taken. That has always been the practice.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Will the right hon. Gentleman give us notice when the Tithe Bill Amendments will be taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Certainly, Sir.

PIER AT CASTLETOWNSEND.

DR. TANNER: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any steps are proposed to be taken to provide a suitable pier at Castletownsend, County Cork; whether several resolutions from Public Bodies have been received advocating the building of such a structure; whether, in view of the fact that Castletownsend is a fishing port of considerable importance, and largely used by Irish, English, and Manx fishermen, and having regard to the distress and destitution now prevailing in the district in question, this reproductive public work will be proceeded with?

SIR H. MAXWELL: A Memorial in relation to the construction of a pier at Castletownsend was received by the Board of Works in October, 1887, but I am not aware whether resolutions have been received from Public Bodies. So far as I know, there is no intention of taking any steps for providing a pier at Castletownsend.

Dr. Tanner

DR. TANNER: Is the hon. Baronet aware that the old pier was built by the Treasury, that it is falling down, and also that this harbour is frequented by a large number of fishing boats during the fishing season? If representations are made to the Treasury will attention be paid to them, and the demands for providing harbour accommodation be, at any rate, inquired into?

SIR H. MAXWELL: Any representation which is made will be carefully considered.

IRISH CONSTABULARY FORCE FUND.

MR. EDWARD HARRINGTON (Kerry, W.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland whether it is the intention of the Inspector General and the Royal Irish Constabulary Authorities to wind up the Constabulary Force Fund, and whether unmarried men who joined the Force before 1883, and who are now on pension, continue to subscribe to the Fund with no other prospect of return than that of said Fund being wound up and apportioned to subscribers; and whether rewards of merit have been taken from this Fund and distributed to officers and men who may have joined the Force since 1883, or who, in any case, have not been subscribers to the Fund?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. MADDEN, Dublin University): The insurance branch of the Constabulary Force Fund is in process of being wound up by gradual extinction under the Act of 1883, which prohibits members joining the Force after that date from subscribing to the Fund. There is, however, no intention to make a general distribution of the Fund; but each claim against it will, as heretofore, be paid upon maturing. There is no known instance of an unmarried man now on pension continuing to subscribe to the fund, nor could such a subscriber derive any benefit from doing so by the rules governing the fund. Rewards of merit are not paid from the insurance branch of the fund, which is paid from the subscriptions of contributing members, but from the reward branch, the income of which is derived from portions of fines awarded to the police by Magistrates, or under the Licensing Acts. Eight men, appointed since the Act of 1883, have received rewards from the reward branch, amounting in all to a total of £18.

COMPLAINT AGAINST AN IRISH POLICE CONSTABLE.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland by whose orders did a police constable, named Connell, stationed at Schull, County Cork, load his rifle in the presence of a large number of people returning from a meeting which was addressed by Mr. William O'Brien, M.P.; and was such action warranted by the regulations of the Royal Irish Constabulary?

MR. MADDEN: The Constabulary authorities report that the constable had not received any orders in the matter. It was explained at the time of the occurrence that the constable's action was the result of the hostile demeanour of the crowd. The reply to the second paragraph of the question is in the negative.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: Has any action been taken in regard to this man, who appears to have acted without warrant?

MR. MADDEN: Yes, Sir; the matter was reported as a breach of discipline, and came before the Inspector General who admonished the constable and placed an unfavourable mark against his name.

OPEN-AIR PREACHING AT ARKLOW.

MR. DE COBAIN (Belfast, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that out of four charges brought against the Rev. R. C. Hallowes, Rector of Arklow, and his curate, the Rev. J. W. Harrison, of obstruction, alleged to have been caused by the holding of religious services, three have failed for want of evidence, and that in the fourth case the rev. gentlemen were convicted by the Magistrates; is he aware that the ground occupied by Mr. Hallowes and Mr. Harrison has frequently been used for Land League and National League meetings; under what law or regulation did Divisional Commissioner Cameron act in ordering the arrest of Messrs. Hallowes and Harrison, when on their knees praying with their congregation, and 30 minutes before the arrival of the train which was to convey them to Wexford Gaol; and whether he will cause inquiry to be made into the circumstance of the case?

MR. MADDEN: The facts are as stated by my hon. Friend in the first paragraph of the question. National League meetings have been held on the Parade Ground where Mr. Hallowes held the open-air services. The Constabulary Authorities report that the arrests were quietly effected and were not made until the train was actually due; but the train was half an hour late in reaching Arklow.

MR. PARNELL'S MEETING AT NEWRY.

MR. DE COBAIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been drawn to the outrage alleged to be perpetrated by the Belfast section of the meeting of the supporters of the hon. Member for Cork (Mr. Parnell) at Newry on his return journey, in the discharge of two shots out of the railway carriage by which they travelled, inflicting injury on two or more persons in the vicinity of the train; whether he has heard as to whether the injuries are likely to prove fatal, and if he can state to what Political Party the injured persons belong; and whether the Constabulary have obtained any trace of the perpetrators of the outrage?

MR. MADDEN: Two men were wounded by shots fired on the occasion mentioned. According to the latest information both men are progressing favourably. A man has been arrested on the charge of firing a revolver, and is detained in custody.

ALLEGED ASSAULT BY A PRIEST AT ARKLOW.

MR. DE COBAIN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that Father Dumphy, the parish priest of Arklow, had on Sunday the 1st of March broken through the ranks of the Constabulary in the streets of Arklow, taken hold of District Inspector Tottenham, and assaulted him, calling at the same time on the mob to follow him; and what course the Government intend to pursue in relation to this case?

MR. MADDEN: The Constabulary authorities report that on the occasion referred to, the action and language of

Father Dumphy were of a violent character, but no special course is proposed to be taken.

LAND COMMISSION—KILMACTHOMAS AND WATERFORD.

Mr. P. J. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland if a Sub-Commission is soon to sit to hear applications for the fixing of judicial rents in the Unions of Kilmacthomas and Waterford; and, if so, about what date; and, if not, whether, in view of the number of tenants in those districts anxious to have judicial rents fixed, a Sub-Commission will be sent there?

Mr. MADDEN: I must ask the hon. Gentleman to postpone the question.

Mr. P. J. POWER: I will put it down for to-morrow.

IRISH RELIEF WORKS.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland what is the daily cost of relief works in West Mayo and the Island of Achill; how much is spent daily in payment of men of the Royal Irish Constabulary and other officials in superintending such relief; and whether Catholic and Protestant clergyman, in each district where relief is necessary, are consulted upon the specific requirements and urgency of the poor people in want of help?

Mr. MADDEN: The average daily cost in wages to persons employed on labour at relief works in the district mentioned is £134 9s. 10d. In addition to this, the amount spent daily in payment of Constabulary timekeepers and Royal Engineer supervisors is £14 4s., and the county surveyor gets a sum of £2 2s. for any day he may be employed. Any recommendations from clergymen are fully and carefully considered. In many instances their suggestions have been adopted.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman how many non-officials have been employed in the superintendence of relief works and the disbursement of relief in the County of Cork during the past month; and what was the total amount paid to the men in the police, and other officials and non-officials during the same period?

Mr. Madden

Mr. MADDEN: There are no non-officials employed in the superintendence of the relief works or the disbursement of wages. Sixty-one officials, including the County Surveyor, are employed in this work. The cost of the various officials carrying on the work up to the 28th February was £253 18s. 6d.

Dr. TANNER: What was paid to the police, and what to other officials?

Mr. MADDEN: The question of the hon. Member related to the total amount. If he wishes to know how that amount was divided he must put another question.

Dr. TANNER: If I move for a Return will the right hon. Gentleman grant it?

Mr. MADDEN: I do not know that there would be any objection, except the objection to the multiplication of unnecessary Returns.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the condition of a vast proportion of the population of the Gweedore district of Dunfanaghy Union; whether any part of Ireland can show a worse condition than is to be found in the Meenacladdy, Bloodyforeland, and Brinlack portions of this district; what measures he proposes for the relief of this misery; whether his attention has been called to the consequences that must result next year owing to the fact that no seed potatoes have been provided for the Gweedore district, and whether he purposes making provision to prevent the famine that must ensue next year if seed be not promptly provided now; and whether it is by any fault of the Poor Law Guardians of the district that no seed has been provided; and, if so, whether he can compel this Board of Guardians to perform their duty in this crisis, or whether he will take steps to save the people from the consequences of their neglect?

Mr. MADDEN: I must ask the hon. Member to postpone this question.

LABOURERS' DWELLINGS IN CORK.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Attorney General for Ireland if he can state how much has been spent of the sum of £20,450 sanctioned for the erection of 288 labourers' dwellings in Cork, under the Labouring Classes' Lodgings and Dwellings Acts, and Housing of the

Working Classes Act, 1885; how many of these dwellings are completed and inhabited; and when will the work be finished?

MR. MADDEN: The total amount sanctioned for labourers' dwellings in the City of Cork is £20,291 9s. 5d., in addition to a sum of £1,000 sanctioned previously. The number of houses originally proposed to be erected was 298. Building sites have, it appears, been acquired, but as it is proposed by the Sanitary Authority to reduce the number of houses to 254, they have been obliged to submit an amended scheme to the Board of Works. Upon this scheme being approved, the Sanitary Authority intends to proceed at once with the erection of the houses, which can be completed within a few months from the date of approval.

PRISONERS' EXERCISE IN IRELAND.

DR. TANNER: I beg to postpone my question (to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if there is any open-air space in Clonmel, Galway, Kilmainham, or Tullamore Gaols, where prisoners can take the two hours' exercise as required by the Irish Prison Rules?) It appears in a wrong form upon the Paper.

NEW WRIT

For the Borough of Aston Manor—in the room of George Kynoch, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Akers-Douglas.*)

MERCHANT SHIPS' MATES AND PETTY OFFICERS (WAGES).

Return ordered—

"Of average Rates of Wages paid to Mates of all grades, Petty Officers, such as Boatswains, Carpenters, Quartermasters, &c., for the years 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1885, 1886, 1887, 1888, 1889, and 1890, distinguishing between Steam and Sailing Vessels of under 500 tons, of 500 and under 1,000 tons, of 1,000 and under 1,500 tons, of 1,500 and under 2,000 tons, of 2,000 tons and above (in continuation of Table 23 of Progress of British Merchant Shipping, Parliamentary Paper No. 192, of Session 1890)."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

MOTION.

MERCHANDISE MARKS BILL.

On Motion of Baron Henry de Worms, Bill to amend "The Merchandise Marks Act, 1887," ordered to be brought in by Baron Henry de Worms and Mr. Attorney General.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 245.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1890-91.

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS VII.

1. £55,831, Relief of Distress, Ireland.

(4.32.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): Mr. Courtney, it will be in the recollection of the Committee that in the early days of last December I asked the Committee of Supply to vote a relatively nominal sum—£5,000—towards the relief of distress in Ireland. The sum I ask the Committee to vote to-day is a much larger one, and hon. Members have, no doubt, a right to ask what account I can give of the plan we are actually carrying out, and which I briefly sketched on a previous occasion. Our experience, of course, is not yet complete. In England, as the spring approaches, the strain of distress either on the Poor Law administration or on private charity sensibly diminishes; but in Ireland, when the distress arises from the failure of the potato, the crisis is not in the winter months, but it goes on steadily increasing in intensity, until it is either relieved by the annual migration of the able-bodied men to England or Scotland, or by digging for the next year's potatoes in those parts of the country where migration is not practised. Therefore, it comes about that the account I shall have to give to-day of what we have done in the way of relieving distress does not include a survey of the whole of the transactions in which this House has taken part in this matter. All I intend now to do is to give the results of our efforts and experience up to the most recent available date. Now, the Vote on which we are actually engaged is a Vote for the Relief of Distress, to be followed immediately by a Vote on Railways; but I think it will be convenient to the Committee if, on the first of the Votes, I touch not, indeed, on the railway policy of the Government—not upon those matters in which I know the right hon. Member for Newcastle is interested, but on certain incidents and circumstances connected with our railway policy which have a direct bearing on the relief of distress. Therefore, if the Committee will permit me to presuppose the measures that have been adopted for the relief of distress, and to exclude from our purview such steps as have been taken to meet that distress by special arrangements for railway work, I think the convenience of the Committee will be regarded, and they will have a clearer view than if my statement were divided illogically into two parts. As the Committee are aware, the general railway policy of the Government has no connection whatever with the distress in Ireland. It was begun even before the failure of the potato crop in 1890 was so much as thought of, and, probably, if that failure had merely been allowed to run its ordinary course, the railways would have been constructed, not quite sufficiently or as now constructed, but they would have been constructed at a period when they would not have served, or hardly at all, to mitigate the distress arising through the recent failure of the potato crop. But the House and the Government have taken means by which the work of these railways shall be made directly useful for the purposes we are now considering. In August last a Bill was passed, under great Parliamentary difficulties, in this House for the purpose of expediting these railways. It received the assistance of the majority of the Members of the House, and many at that time seemed to be of opinion that, do what we could, we should not be able to hurry on the construction of these works so as to bring them into action for the relief of distress. But I am glad to think that the prophecies we gave utterance to have not been proved inaccurate. Every means the law allows has been employed to hurry on these railways. Grand Juries were called together early in November, and they assented to the railways, and the Government lost no time in obtaining the necessary land and in getting the contracts made. If we had pursued the ordinary course there is no doubt we should not have been able to set to work much before March, April, or May; but in order that the demand for labour might be met at once we anticipated the completion of the contract plans by provisional contracts on a schedule of prices, and in this way it was possible to ante-date the ordinary and natural commencement of the lines by many months. The result was that the sod was broken early in December for most of the lines, and by the end of December a large number of them were in operation. Another difficulty we had to contend with was in the acquisition of the necessary land. Here our progress was facilitated by the Act of 1890, and but for the co-operation of the localities, and especially the priests of the localities, together with the landlords and the tenants occupying the land, it would have been quite impossible to set to work as soon as we did. All heartily co-operated, and the result was that we did not meet with any of those obstacles which one might naturally have supposed would have hampered us. There are two railways on which work has been begun—the extension of the Mulranny line to Achill, and the line from Collooney to Claremorris. These were the only lines which the Government started in view of the distress, and I believe they were justified by the condition of the population through which they run. I have to acknowledge the immense assistance we have derived from all quarters, by which great trouble and a great deal of expense have been saved to the Government in carrying out these valuable and, I hope, permanently useful works. We were told that these railways would not afford employment to the particular class of the population it was desired to employ; it was said that most of the money would be spent in skilled labour, and that only a small branch of the population on either side of the lines would receive any benefit from them. In fact, we were told that any hopes we might build upon those railways as a means of averting distress would be doomed to disappointment. I am glad to think these prophecies have not been fulfilled. We have, where we could, entered into formal arrangements with the various contractors in order to secure that the greatest amount of unskilled labour should be employed, and where these formal arrangements were not possible informal contracts have been entered into. The contractors have been good enough to come and talk the matter over with me. They have fitted their plans in with the views of the Government; they have made every effort to suit us, and I have consented to take the advice of, and act in co-operation with, the local priests in the matter of selecting the labour to be employed on the line, and the result has undoubtedly been that while, no doubt, a large number of persons—or a certain number of persons—in the neighbourhood of the line who could not be described as in an acute state of distress have been employed. There have been no instances where, after the line has been in process of construction, and our plans have begun to work, able-bodied persons in acute distress have been excluded from employment. I believe that this will be confirmed by every one who has had practical experience of the work on the line, and if it be true—as I believe it to be—I think it is eminently satisfactory. It is not necessary that I should go into the special contracts that were made for the purpose of securing labour. The general result I have given to the House, and probably no more details will be required. I have a good deal of ground to cover, but if further details are wanted I shall be happy to supply them. We have found that on some of these lines the demand for employment considerably exceeded the demand for labour which would take place if the construction of the lines were left to follow ordinary development. In order to meet that, further arrangements were made with the contractors beyond those broad, general arrangements to which I have referred. On some lines, for example, I found that by making embankments from cuttings it was possible, no doubt at increased cost, to augment the amount of unskilled labour that could be immediately said to work, and I made arrangements for carrying that out. On other lines I found that if special arrangements were made with the contractors, and they could be recouped for the loss which would fall on them through having the earth taken in barrows from the cuttings to the embankments, they would be prepared to give a very much larger amount of employment than they otherwise could. Thus, by dealing with each line and each contractor separately, and by having personal conversations and discussions we have been enabled to squeeze out these plans of railway construction, so as to give the very maximum of unskilled labour it was possible to give. The general result has been that the number of men employed has been about 8,000, who, I suppose, may be multiplied by five or six in order to get the number of individuals interested; and the amount of wages paid is something over £40,000 since the railway works began. A conclusive proof, in my judgment, that the works fully supplied the demands for labour is that in many of these districts there were strikes for shorter hours or higher pay. The wages have ranged from 11s. to 14s. I do not think anything less than 11s. has been paid, and, though I do not complain of the strikes, I think they have formed conclusive proof that our demand for labour was not less than the supply, and that the distress was not so acute as to induce the people to sacrifice any of their cherished convictions, or imaginary convictions, to obtain a livelihood. I recollect on one of the lines—the Westport to Mulranny line—gang after gang gave warning or struck because a tenant of an evicted farm was one of the labourers. I do not imagine that any of the gentlemen who then struck have been allowed to resume work. That, of course, is not my affair. I do not know whether there is any other matter on which I should touch in regard to railways; but before I pass on to the subject of the relief works there are one or two miscellaneous matters on which the House will probably desire some information. The first relates to the project which I had some hope of being able to accomplish—namely, land reclamation. I have been disappointed in that matter. Anybody travelling through the West of Ireland would suppose that the amount of unoccupied land is at present unlimited; that the landlords would probably desire nothing more than to sell it, and that in the sale they would have the co-operation of all the occupiers in the neighbourhood. But in the inquiries which I made in regard to the various portions or parcels of land which I thought might be suitable for reclamation I have always been met with one or two difficulties—either it has been proved that the landlord, either on account of defective title or some other reason, could not satisfactorily sell his interest, or else that the number of subsidiary rights, rights of grazing, turbary, rights of passage owned by occupiers in the neighbourhood, were so numerous and so impossible to get rid of that the Government could not be expected to embark in that transaction. I do not say that land for reclamation cannot be acquired; I only say that, without advertising and taking steps which I did not feel at liberty to take, I have not been able, so far, to acquire land, and therefore I have not been able to carry out an experiment which I think would have been interesting, and possibly very useful. But one experiment I have been able to start —an experiment in planting. It is on the south coast of Lough Boyle. There it so happened that the landlord was quite ready to sell, and the hill-side of 1,000 acres was in the hands of a single tenant, and that tenant was Father Flannerty, a gentleman whose name is perhaps known to many to whom I speak as one who has made great and useful efforts to ameliorate the condition of the people. He offered to give up his rights in the land for nothing. The land required from the landlord was obtained for 10s. an acre, and I have given directions to start an experiment in forestry which I cannot but think will prove instructive. I may say that I sent round a large number of inquiries to various owners in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and I have received a number of valuable answers from them. The information I have thus been able to obtain has quite convinced me that not only in Ireland, but in England and Scotland as well, we are far behind the Continent in this matter of forestry. Of course, it is natural it should be so; there are whole regions in Germany and Denmark where the population depend on wood as their chief source of livelihood; but, still, I cannot help thinking that the sooner we make ourselves acquainted with what they do on the Continent in this regard the sooner we shall be able to turn to useful account large tracts in Ireland, in this country, and in Scotland which are now little better than waste. The next question I have to call attention to is that of fuel. Last year there was not only a failure of the potato crop, but in one or two districts where a potato famine was not anticipated there was real reason to apprehend that the people would suffer greatly from want of fuel. I thought that in this matter the difficulties attending Government intervention—I mean in connection with the supply of fuel—were overwhelming; and, therefore, after much meditation, I reluctantly took the course of authorising Boards of Guardians of the several unions concerned to give relief even to able-bodied persons holding more than a quarter of an acre of land in certain electoral divisions of their unions, provided that relief was given simply in the way of turf. The number of unions to whom I gave these instructions was 11, situate in Donegal, Mayo, Clare, Kerry, and Limerick. So far, I believe, not a single union has taken advantage of the permission thus given. This is partly to be accounted for by the fact that subsequent to the action taken by the Government the weather became extremely dry, and it was found that the failure of turf was not so complete as at one time was feared. The parts of Ireland that have, on the whole, caused most anxiety and difficulty to deal with are the scattered islands on the west coast. They are in many cases separated from the mainland by a passage, short, indeed, but so stormy that they are sometimes cut off from all intercourse with the mainland for days and even weeks together. It is clear that if in these islands the potatoes fail, and there is no means of substituting other food for potatoes, there must be what there never has been on the mainland, namely, danger of famine. Very early in last winter I took steps for having the condition of every one of these islands carefully examined, and the examination has been continued from time to time. The Admiralty has aided me with gunboats; but I found that was not sufficient, and that it was absolutely necessary to have vessels the movements of which I could control without application to any other office; and, moreover, I found that the gunboats could not always face a head wind of the severity which blows on that coast. I was, therefore, authorised by the Treasury to charter two steamers, which have proved invaluable, both for carrying Inspectors from one island to another and in conveying potatoes and stores of meal where it was deemed necessary. They also carried about the engineers and the superintendents of relief works in the places where those works were required. It has been found necessary to establish meal stores at Clare Island, Inniskea, Tory Island, Inishtrahull, and Innismurry. I do not think that, so far, it has been necessary to draw on the meal; but the amount of food stuffs on the islands was, in the opinion of the Inspectors, so small that we could not with safety allow these people to stand the risk of being separated from the relieving officer or food stores for the length of time during which they might be separated from the mainland. Another difficulty arose in connection with these islands, and that was that in many cases Boards of Guardians thought, and thought perhaps rightly, that the people could not afford security for advances of money or money's worth. There are some of the islands which have not paid county cess or poor rate for years. Naturally, the Guardians were not prepared to make a loan to such islands, seeing that they had not shown that anxiety to pay their just debts which would give confidence to their creditors. By way of solution of the difficulty, we started relief works, and we paid 7s. a week, which is the common rate of wages on the relief works, and this was paid partly in money and partly in meal, leaving the balance accumulated to be paid in seed potatoes, and by this means the difficulty to which I have adverted in Innismurry and Tory Island was successfully got over. That brings me to the case of seed potatoes. The House knows that last year, following the precedent of 1880, we made a loan to Boards of Poor Law Guardians to enable them to purchase seed potatoes to be provided on credit to tenants within the limit of their respective unions. The whole responsibility for the kind and amount of the potato seed was thrown on the Guardians, but we have done everything in our power to enable them to choose the best possible seed. We have supplied them with forms of tender, we have given them advice in regard to the kind of seed that is most suitable, and we have, in fact, done all in our power to secure that the loan which this House authorised shall be spent in getting the very best seed that the market can supply. Perhaps the House would like to know some of the details. After the Guardians had issued tenders in the form prescribed by the Local Government Board, the Land Commission, acting in co-operation with my Department, have supplied general and local Inspectors. The general Inspectors were in Glasgow and the North of Ireland, and they were able to telegraph to the local Inspectors when a defective cargo was either sent from Scotland or landed in Ireland. The local Inspectors acted with the Committee of the Board of Guardians; they inspected the seed potatoes on delivery by the contractors, and the result of their inspection was that in no less than 37 unions 46 consignments were found to be defective in quantity or quality. In these cases the contractor was communicated with, and the default was made good. It must not be supposed, however, that all the errors were on one side. I could mention some cases in which, after the potatoes had been taken home by the tenant, he, with a view of getting off having to pay for them, said they were rotten, when, in fact, they were perfectly sound and good. The Inspectors in these cases promply visited the tenants' houses and satisfied themselves that the seed potatoes were quite sound. These cases show that there has been fraud or error on both sides, and that the Inspectors have done admirable and valuable work, and it is satisfactory to know that the Boards of Guardians have shown themselves grateful, and have appreciated the efforts made on their behalf. Now I come to the question of relief works proper. The Committee has, no doubt, gathered that almost all the works have been in the shape of roads. That is not invariably the case, but it is mainly, and, of course, we have met with a great difficulty as to the selection of the roads to be constructed. Any one acquainted with Ireland will understand the kind of pressure that has been put upon a Government which is known to have unlimited resources at its command to start works wherever a Local Authority happens to desire it. Of course, there is everywhere a useful road to be made. There is no part of Ireland, probably no part of the world, where, if you have the money, you cannot spend it usefully. And in the West of Ireland there is scarcely any part where there is not genuine poverty. I have received a large number of letters and resolutions, and I believe over a hundred questions have been put to me in the House this Session to the effect that relief works are urgently required in various districts. I have been told of impending starvation. In such cases I have, within 24 hours, invariably sent down to make inquiries, and in every case I have found such statements to be entire, and, in some instances, fraudulent, exaggerations. It would have been easy for me to have earned cheap popularity in Ireland by a lavish assent to the applications made to me, irrespective of the interests of the British taxpayer. If, on the other hand, I have refused, as I certainly have, very many applications for relief works, it has not been mainly or principally in the interest of the British taxpayer, but rather in the interest of the population of Ireland. I am perfectly certain that to repeat the experiment of 1880, and to lavish money where it is not absolutely required, to make people believe that if they want a year of prosperity they must cry out in a year of panic, is ruinous to the population, and this is why I have refused, and I am afraid have appeared harsh in refusing, the impassioned demands that have been made on me by those who, no doubt, believed in the truth of the statements upon which those demands were founded. The fact is that it is not easy to discover the real truth as to the existence of distress even by those living in the locality. A police sergeant sent up to the Government a statement that the condition of his district was awful, and that one death a week from starvation was taking place. I made inquiries, and found that this statement was greatly exaggerated. Priests living in a district, and who, one would suppose, would be well acquainted with the resources of that district, have made to me communications showing that the population was on the verge of starvation, and imploring aid. In some of these cases I have offered it—I have offered at a place not more than 10 or 12 miles distant free lodging, free cooking, and 12s. a week to those men who desired work, and yet they have not come. I do not adduce this with a view of showing that these priests intended to deceive me, but it is evidence that they were themselves deceived. In one instance where this offer was made—I believe it was in one of the poorest districts of the Swinford Union—nine men did apply for work, but five were so drunk that they were incapable of working, and the other four accepted the work, but soon threw it up. [Colonel NOLAN: Name.] I think I had better not give any names, as I do not wish to make any reflection on those who made these statements to me. I give these cases as indicating the extreme difficulty in which even people well acquainted with a district find themselves when it comes to determining whether people in that district are or are not on the verge of starvation. The people all live in poor huts and in very much the same way, and the amount of their stock is not necessarily a conclusive indication of their condition. It is thus very easy to mislead even the most careful person as to the real amount of distress. The course I have taken with regard to starting works is this:—I have not relied upon any one Report or source of information; but if I had relied upon one set of persons I should not give their names to the Committee; because, as anyone who knows the condition of the localities of which I speak is well aware, if a man were to report that relief was not needed in a particular place, and if his name were made known, he would render himself obnoxious to the whole population, his popularity would suffer, and his opportunities of doing useful work in the future would be destroyed. I shall not, therefore, throw the responsibility of determining where works should or should not be undertaken upon my officers; the whole responsibility rests upon myself. I have not rejected any source of information, but have collected information from Inspectors, the Constabulary, local Justices, the clergy, local gentry, and other persons; I have collated it all, and come to the best conclusion I could in the circumstances. I started works on this plan: Long ago, through the assistance of Colonel Fraser and latterly of Major Peacock, works were roughly designed for those places where it was thought they might be required. When

I have satisfactory information that the work is really needed, it is started as soon as possible. The wages in ordinary cases are at the rate of 7s. a week. Only one member of any family is allowed to work except when a family happens to be an extremely large one, when two of its members are allowed to work. Lists are carefully made out of the persons really in need in a district, and those persons only are allowed to work, all others being excluded. I am well aware that this system of allowing only those on the lists to have work has produced a good deal of discontent, but I believe it to be absolutely necessary. If you were to give as much as 7s. a week and were to exercise no supervision as to the class of persons to whom work should be given, this Committee would inevitably be asked to spend money upon those who are not absolutely in need of it. In framing the lists of persons in need of assistance it has not been thought necessary to compel these poor farmers to sell all the stock they may have upon their farms. According to English ideas it may seem absurd to give public assistance to a man who may have a few sheep or a cow; but it is not so in Ireland. Of course, the amount of stock that a man may have ought to be taken into account; but the mere possession of stock ought not to be considered as an absolute bar to work on the relief works. Nevertheless, the number of these works has been kept down very low, not too low to satisfy the necessities of the localities, although no doubt too low to please many of the persons most concerned. There are certain places where it has been found impossible to collect the information necessary for drawing up a satisfactory list. There are cases where I place no reliance upon the lists furnished to me of persons really in need. The plan I have adopted in such cases is to alter the remuneration from 7s. to a stone of meal paid in kind daily. The worth of a stone of meal is about 11d., and a man working six days a week would therefore earn the equivalent of 5s. 6d. That is enough to keep a family alive, but it is a very small wage, and I do not believe that you will get people to work from 8 in the morning until 5 in the evening for a stone of meal a day unless they are really in need of it. I have found in those places where this system has been started and where there was a large demand for labour before that the demand has very materially fallen off. Perhaps the Committee would like to have statistics of the men employed, and the money spent upon the relief works. The number of men employed in Donegal is 752, and the amount expended in wages £1,674. In Sligo 85 persons are employed; in Mayo, 2,555, and the amount expended in wages is £7,500. In Galway the number of persons is 2,300, wages £8,400; in Cork, persons 1,700, wages £3,400. The total number of persons employed on February 28 was 7,392, and the total amount of wages spent up to that day upon the labourers was £21,159. We are now actually spending upon labour at the rate of about £3,000 a week. Now I ought to describe the system we have adopted for supervising the relief. Any one acquainted with the distress works started in 1880 and at other periods will know that one of the greatest difficulties then experienced was the difficulty of supervision. The gangers were almost always local men, who had their favourites, and the result was that they largely employed persons who were not amongst those most in need of relief. Moreover, it was not always possible to trust them to see that the day's work was really carried out, and that the day's wages were not earned on false pretences. In order to meet this difficulty I have asked the War Office to lend me the services of two Engineer officers, Major Peacock and Lieutenant Harvey, and they are responsible for the general management of these relief works. Under them the county surveyors, who in Ireland are competent engineers, settle the details of the works and exercise a general engineering control over them. Men of the Royal Engineers act as supervisors, and supervise the construction of the works. The timekeepers or gangers are sometimes local men who can be trusted; but, as a rule, I have obtained the aid of the constabulary, the men being drawn from other districts than those in which the works are in progress. I believe they have given universal satisfaction, and have carried out their duties admirably. Our system, I believe, has secured this invaluable result—the people in the West of Ireland do not look upon the relief work as an excuse for getting money for doing nothing; they have to do a day's work for a day's wages. The police, I may add, also act largely as paymasters. Everybody must be aware that the task upon which the Government have been engaged is one of extreme complexity and difficulty. Errors have been committed, I do not doubt. I dare say that there are people engaged on the relief works who ought not to be there, and that there may be cases—I trust very few—of people who ought to be, but are not there. But when we recollect to what extent individual charity goes astray, how many mistakes a charitably-disposed man often makes, how difficult it is for him to investigate the individual cases brought before him, how often fraud is committed in spite of every precaution, I think the Committee will be lenient if some errors are brought home to the Government. We have to act without precedents to help us, for the task we are engaged in has never been undertaken by any previous Government; our plan embraces such different things as railway construction, road-making, the provision of seed potatoes, and the supply of meal, and we have had to create a department for the execution of all these different schemes. When the Committee recollects all this, I am certain that it will think that if the Government have committed errors they are pardonable errors. But I believe it will be found that, on the whole, we have met this great difficulty as well as it could be met. I believe that the general plan we have devised—in its main outlines, at all events—is not capable of any very material improvement, and I believe that we have succeeded in relieving the distress with a minimum of demoralisation to the people. If I am not deceived in these hopes, we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that the failure of the potato crop this winter will leave behind no feeling of soreness against the Government; that it will not render more difficult of accomplishment those more permanent schemes of amelioration upon which I believe this Committee is bent, and which this Government will endeavour to carry out; and that we shall not find, when the clouds break and this period of darkness comes to an end, that the permanent task before us has been rendered more difficult by the gloomy circumstances of the present winter.

(5.30.) MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I have no fault to find with the tone of the right hon. Gentleman's statement, or with the lines upon which the Government are proceeding, and I have only a few observations to make which are of a general character, and in offering them I shall, perhaps, be excused for rising before hon. Members from Ireland, who would interpose with greater local knowledge. The right hon. Gentleman has told the Committee that the land reclamation scheme from which in December he hoped for considerable results has now been abandoned. I, for one, do not greatly regret it, because, as I ventured to say in December, I believed the views of the right hon. Gentleman in the matter of land reclamation were not based on facts which could be sustained. The right hon. Gentleman's view was that reclamation should be undertaken on a large scale by the Government; but I ventured to point out that the only chance of effecting land reclamation lay in intrusting it to small men, each man reclaiming his own patch for his own benefit. Under the head of planting, I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman intends to go further, or whether the experiment of planting 1,000 acres is to be the end of his activity. I admit what the right hon. Gentleman has said about the backwardness of this country in the art of forestry. But the right hon. Gentleman forgot that within the last three or four years a Committee of the House has been sitting and has made certain important recommendations in reference to forestry, if not in Ireland, certainly in England and Scotland, and it is the fault of Her Majesty's Government that no steps have been taken to carry them out. I hope the Minister of Agriculture will pay attention to these recommendations of the Select Committee. The right hon. Gentleman has not been quite clear in explaining the amount of his estimate. Is the £60,000 to carry out the whole of his relief policy, or is it merely an instalment? I asked that question in December. I did not press the right hon. Gentleman then, nor will I press him now; but it would be convenient for the Committee to be told whether this £60,000 is the whole they should be asked for. I do not understand how the amount was made up. The right hon. Gentleman told us that £21,000 has been expended on wages on works, and that £3,000 a week is now going on.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: A great many items are involved. The £21,000 merely refers to the actual wages on the relief works.

MR. J. MORLEY: Do I understand that £21,000 has been actually expended, and that the payment of £3,000 a week is going on?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

MR. J. MORLEY: The right hon. Gentleman has not said how many weeks that is to last. Am I to take it that it is a continuous expenditure?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes.

MR. J. MORLEY: The items have not been very clearly stated. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that he has been allowed by the Treasury to employ two boats on the west coast. Is the cost of these boats included? Of course, we know there must be a considerable expenditure for material. I have not gathered the amount of the expenditure upon seed potatoes. The right hon. Gentleman has made reference to certain frauds and errors being detected, such as might be expected in any operations of this kind. I have no doubt the Committee would be inclined to look with great leniency on any errors that may be brought to light. I have only to say that, at all events, we gather from the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman that when we and hon. Members representing Irish constituencies were charged in September and October last with having stated that there was real distress in Ireland in order to make political capital, there is now ample evidence in the Reports of the Inspectors that there is no truth in that charge, and that there is very real distress, which the right hon. Gentleman himself has now admitted. Putting it generally, as far as can be gathered from the Reports of the Inspectors, what is it that has happened? Simply this: that over one-half of Ireland there is a deficiency of one-fourth of the potato crops, and this seems to be the foundation of the scheme of the right hon. Gentleman. With respect to railways, I put a question on January 30th to the Secretary to the Treasury, my object being to ascertain whether, when a certain contract since laid before Parliament was entered into by the Government with the Great Western Railway of Ireland—whether an opportunity was given for competitive tenders, or whether the Government had altogether placed themselves in the hands and at the mercy of that Railway Company. The Secretary to the Treasury used language at that time which I did not clearly understand——

THE CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the right hon. Gentleman that this would come more properly under the next Vote, which relates to the expenditure under the head of railways.

MR. J. MORLEY: In that case, Sir, I shall make what remarks I have to offer on this point when the Railway Vote is taken. I only alluded to the matter because the right hon. Gentleman had already opened it in his statement. I may, however, be allowed to say that in regard to the question of the railway policy of the Government to which the right hon. Gentleman referred at considerable length, I should like to receive from him an explanation of the fact that no opportunity has ever been given for inviting tenders for the construction of the railways that are now being undertaken. I will reserve what remarks I have to make on that subject until the next Vote. I can only say that, as far as I am enabled to understand the operations set forth by the Chief Secretary, there is really no disposition on this side of the House to find fault or to offer any opposition.

(5.42.) COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I have listened to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary with great attention, and on the whole I do not think there is much reason for quarelling with the course he has taken; but I do think there is some confusion in the statement he has put before us with regard to matters of fact. The right hon Gentleman proposes to pay the starving peasantry by three different scales of wages—a 12s. scale, a 7s. scale, and a 5s. 6d. scale; and in regard to the 12s. scale I suppose the right hon. Gentleman only refers to wages in connection with railway construction, which is a matter that does not come under the present Vote. I may, however, say that not long since I was travelling with a railway engineer, who told me that it was very hard to get men for the work of making railways who were accustomed to, and able to, perform really hard work, such as that kind of labour involves. It could hardly be expected that men who are to be paid only 12s. a week will do the sort of work that is usually done by railway labourers. It is perhaps enough to pay to a man who requires it in the shape of relief, and who merely needs assistance to tide over from one bad harvest to another, which he hopes will be a good one; but if you take the case of the ordinary labourer who expects to be put into the same position as the English labourer, I do not think 12s. a week can be looked upon as proper wages. It must be remembered that there always are a great number of men who look upon themselves in the light of professional labourers rather than as belonging to the class to whom it is proposed to give relief. These are the men who are discontented with this 12s. a week. Some of them are discontented, I know. These railways are not, strictly speaking, relief works. They were instituted long before the relief was thought of. It is a mere accident that they fall in the year in which the potato harvest has proved bad. The policy of the Chief Secretary has been, up to the present time, to confine the relief works to the mountainous districts. He has left the general portions of the country without any relief at all. There is a large proportion of the distressed population in portions of Mayo, Galway, and Roscommon—other than the mountainous districts. As far as I can see, the Chief Secretary has done nothing in those districts. He promised me that three weeks' ago work would be instituted in those districts. This is the point that I make against the Chief Secretary: In November last he took the whole responsibility upon himself of saying where works should or should not be commenced; and he got a Bill granted enabling the Government to do what they liked in the way of relief. Since then he has done nothing whatever in the greater portion of the districts affected by the failure of the potato harvest. In none of these districts could you find one out of every 200 with more than £10 in the bank, and if a man's savings were absorbed, and he were driven to sell some portion of his stock—two or three head of rough cattle, a few sheep, and perhaps a horse, he would be parting with his means of future subsistence. As to the wages given for these relief works, 7s. a week is not a high amount; still I do not grumble at the amount, but at the fact that no wages at all are given in two-thirds of Mayo, three-fourths of Galway, and part of Roscommon and the districts around. It has become fashionable for English Members to visit the mountainous districts, and I admit that poverty there assumes a picturesque aspect, and that, probably, English Members know more about it than they would if it existed within easy distances of London. But the flat portions of Galway, Mayo, Roscommon, and similar districts in other parts of the country, have been neglected altogether up to the present, as far as relief works go. The Chief Secretary has been making promises from week to week, but I hope he will see that these works are commenced in the districts to which I refer. As to the distribution of potatoes I have no great fault to find with it, though, I think, there was a little red-tapeism in some of the orders issued by the Local Government Board. But I am of opinion that the perfect success of the Act will not be shown until the time for the recovery of debts arrives. I went round some of the districts and found the farmers taking limited and moderate quantities of potatoes, and I expect that, on the whole, the Act will be tolerably successful and will work well. I should wish those who are charged with the administration of the Act to take note of the fact that within a fortnight or three weeks applications for additional quantities of potatoes will be made. The Unions have, rather than have left on their hands potatoes which they would be unable to get rid of, under-estimated the quantities they required. I think they were right in doing so. But now that they will have to make application for further quantities, I hope no red-tapeism will stand in the way of their being supplied. I am extremely glad that the Chief Secretary is making exertions in Father Flannerty's district, but

I think the Chief Secretary has exaggerated the difficulty of acquiring land in Ireland for the purposes of his plans, and he has only to notify to the proprietors that a reasonable price will be given, to secure the land he requires. Of course, compensation would have to be given to the tenants. I quite agree with the Chief Secretary that it would be a good thing if we could have more trees in Ireland, and it is high time that Her Majesty's Government should imitate the example of the French Government and commence the planting of trees. By adopting a system of forestry the Government would in many ways develop the resources of the country. It would appear, however, from the Chief Secretary's statement, that he is giving no relief whatever to the people in a large part of Ireland, but I sincerely hope he will be able to increase the scope of his operations. The right hon. Gentleman took great credit for not spending too much money, and for acting on the principles of political economy. I quite agree with him that he is acting on the strictest and most niggardly principles of political economy. He belongs to an insincere school of political economists who have cultivated those hard notions of political economy until they have become a kind of second nature. I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman is acting according to his lights, and thinks he will demoralise the Irish people if he spends more than the sum he has stated; but that sum will not tide more than 50,000 people over a bad harvest, although there are between 3,000,000 and 4,000,000 engaged in agriculture in Ireland, of whom at least one-half have been affected by the potato failure. [Colonel WARING: No.] Well, the hon. Gentleman does not represent the whole of Ireland. In his part of the country there has been a splendid potato crop. I am glad it is so, and I hope his part of the country will get no relief; but if the hon. Gentleman likes, I will say a third or a fourth of the agricultural population has been affected. Well, how can the money which the right hon. Gentleman is spending help such a vast number of persons? The right hon. Gentleman has been very chary of figures, but it is clear that this insignificant Vote will not meet the present emergency. I do not believe that the people are going to starve in Ireland, on the main land at all events, but I am afraid what will happen will be that the people will eat up their means of subsistence so that they will be reduced to poverty for the next three or four years. This might be very easily remedied if the right hon. Gentleman would apply his relief works over a larger district than at present.

*(6.5.) SIR JOHN POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): There can be no doubt that the statements of the gallant Colonel who has just sat down are entirely justified as regards the area of distress. It is evident from the reports that, along the coast of Kerry, and throughout the County Cork the gravest distress prevails, and that distress will be intensified week after week. This Vote is described as one for the relief of distress in Ireland. It amounts to £60,800, and in that sum we find items of £2,500 and £2,230 for the payment of Inspectors and officials employed in administering this comparatively small amount. How does it come to pass that 9 per cent. of this money is to be laid out upon officials? One answer will naturally occur to those who have been observing the action of the Chief Secretary for the past few months, namely, that these Inspectors of the Local Government Board in Ireland are employed in administering another fund—a fund amounting very nearly to £60,000—a fund which has been collected by Lord Zetland and the Chief Secretary under the famous letter of the 3rd of January last. Can we then deal with this sum of £60,000 and omit altogether from our consideration the £50,000 or £60,000 which has been collected by Lord Zetland and the Chief Secretary? It is impossible. In the letter to which I refer the Chief Secretary very kindly tells the British public what is the main necessity on which he bases that appeal. I venture to ask the attention of the House to the reason given by the right hon. Gentleman why the public should contribute to a charitable fund for Ireland. It is that there exists in Ireland a law which does not exist in England or Scotland, and the effect of that law is to render a charitable appeal necessary. Here is what the Chief Secretary said—

"Outdoor relief, except, of course, in cases of emergency, cannot legally be administered to persons holding more than a quarter of an acre of land; and though no one acquainted even superficially with the history of the Irish Poor Law would regard a general relaxation of this rule as other than a public calamity, yet its maintenance undoubtedly limits the capacity to deal, unaided, with periods of exceptional distress. Here, then, is a state of things which may well appeal to the charitable."

First of all, is the Chief Secretary wise in calling attention to that exceptional law which is harsh to the poor, which does not exist in Great Britain? He says that no one would think of repealing it.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon Member has disqualified himself from discussing that subject because he has brought in a Bill dealing with it.

*SIR J. POPE HENNESSY: I may perhaps be allowed to say that the House many years ago dealt with the law, and actually repealed it, though the Bill was thrown out in another place. The Irish Members say that the area contemplated by the right hon. Gentleman is too small, that the distress in the South and West of Ireland is widespread, and we appeal to the officers of the right hon. Gentleman in support of our contention. The right hon. Gentleman deserves credit for much that he did in connection with Irish distress—he himself visited that particular part of Ireland to which he has especially called attention to-night — but the House will observe the very fact that the right hon. Gentleman's tour was not extended to the more southern parts of Ireland may account for the fact, that in the proposal put before us to-night he has omitted those districts to which my hon. and gallant Friend called attention. But the whole question of the relief of Irish distress depends upon far higher considerations than those which have been stated by the Chief Secretary. Take that experiment which he is now about to begin. He deserves credit for being the first Chief Secretary to try the experiment of afforestation even upon a very minute scale; but it is impossible not to see that the difficulties to which he has just referred are difficulties that can only be encountered by an Executive in Dublin and a Parliament in Dublin. It is impossible for this House, with the large amount of business before it, adequately to deal with the remedies for the state of things in Ireland; and, therefore, what I and other Irish Members venture to recommend to Her Majesty's Government is that they should adopt a radical remedy for all these evils, and that is to throw on my hon. Friend (Mr. Justin McCarthy) and the other hon. Members from Ireland the responsibility of dealing with these questions—not dealing with them here, but in Dublin.

(6.18.) MR. THEODORE FRY (Darlington): I am certain the House listened with the greatest interest to the Chief Secretary's statement of the work the Government have undertaken in various parts of Ireland, but I cannot help feeling that the hon. and gallant Member for Galway (Colonel Nolan) has hit one of the weakest parts of the right hon. Gentleman's statement, and that is, whether he has really commenced sufficient works in order to deal effectually with the distress which now exists. The right hon. Gentleman seems to think he has done all that is necessary for the relief of distress; or, at any rate, he appears to convey that the Government will have very carefully to consider before any other works of any kind are commenced in Ireland.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No; I stated we had started all the works that are necessary up to date.

MR. THEODORE FRY: I am glad of the correction. At all events, the right hon. Gentleman told us that, up to the present time, the total number of persons employed on the works is 7,300. Considering the population of Ireland, that number is exceedingly small. I am aware of the difficulty of starting relief works in a hurry; but I think that the right hon. Gentleman is disposed now to minimise the distress in Ireland just as he was some months ago. The right hon. Gentleman told us that the greatest care is taken to employ the most needy men; but when there are large numbers of men precisely in the same position, how are the men chosen for employment? The week before last I visited the Island of Achill. The population of the Island is about 8,000, and there are 317 persons employed in relief works. These persons are not all men, because I noticed a great number of able-bodied girls, and in some cases two or three members of one family at work. 317 is an exceedingly small number indeed to employ on relief work, especially when there is scarcely any difference whatever in the position or the income of the inhabitants of the Island. Father O'Connor, the respected parish priest, told me he did not believe there are 20 persons on the Island who are not in need of some assistance of one kind or another. If the right hon. Gentleman thinks he is attending to all the distress when he employs 317 persons, he is taking far too much credit to himself. When I was there hundreds of people ran up and clamoured for work, and one man with a large family seemed almost beside himself when he was told he was to be employed. I impress upon the Chief Secretary the need of granting, if it is possible, even a greater amount of relief than he has yet done. The other day I asked a question in the House concerning the distribution of seed potatoes. When I was in Ireland I saw seed potatoes being weighed out. The women carried them away, but when they got them home they found many of them were rotten. Although the responsibility of inspection is taken off the shoulders of the Government by the Inspectors being appointed by the Boards of Guardians, it is necessary the Government should see that the potatoes are carefully sorted. One great evidence of distress is that several families are eating their seed potatoes; but perhaps nothing can more clearly show the poverty of the people than a statement made to me by an eminent ecclesiastic. That gentleman told me that within his knowledge there are at least 100 families who are so poor that the piece of peat with which they heat their gruel in the morning, they carefully cover up with ashes so that it may serve them as a fire at night. This is an occurrence in a district from which large sums of money are taken year after year by the landlords. "And," added the ecclesiastic, "not a single penny comes back to the district in the form of charity or work." I trust Her Majesty's Government will, if possible, increase the area of relief, and see that greater care is exercised in the selection of the seed potatoes which are to be distributed.

*(6.25.) SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): I would point out to the hon. Gentleman (Mr. T. Fry) if the seed potatoes distributed are found to be rotten, the blame in no sense rests with the Government. The distribution of such relief is in the hands of the Boards of Guardians, whom the Government assist by means of a system of Inspectors. I am astonished to hear that out of a population of 8,000 in the Island of Achill there are only 20 persons who are not in need of relief. I think if that were the fact we should have heard a great deal more about it, and it would not have been necessary for an hon. Member of the House of Commons to go over there to make the discovery. I must express surprise that upon this occasion, when a matter so vitally interesting to Ireland is under discussion, the Irish Benches should be almost completely empty. The hon. Member for North Kilkenny (Sir J. Pope Hennessy) seems to think this or any other Irish question cannot be dealt with except by an Irish Parliament. I will not follow him into that question, but I must flatly contradict the hon. Member's statement that "all along the coasts of Kerry and Clare the greatest distress prevails." On certain patches of those coasts there is distress, but there is not distress along the entire coasts. And with regard to the hon. Gentleman's question whether we can deal with this Vote without regard being paid to the private fund raised by Lord Zetland, let me say I cannot see what we have to do with the fund raised by the Lord Lieutenant any more than with the funds of the National League. It is satisfactory to note that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley) has no hostile criticism of the Vote to make. There can be no hostile criticism of the Vote, for the best of all reasons that the greatest care has been taken to prevent anything like jobbery or waste. But in respect to land reclamation, the right hon. Gentleman advocates an alternative policy to that formulated by the Chief Secretary. I am not surprised that the Chief Secretary had to abandon any immediate action with respect to land reclamation, and I am not in the least surprised that he should have found that, although there are large areas which appear to be utterly waste, when you come to examine them you find they are really in occupation of tenants who wont improve. The hon. and gallant Member for Galway

said there was no such difficulty. For instance, in his county, he said, you have only to write to a solicitor in the town of Galway and say you want to buy land, and you can get it. You will have to pay the solicitor, of course, but the whole point of the question is, what price will you have to pay for the land? When the hon. and gallant Member talks about going to the landlord first and then to the tenant, he must know that the object is to get the land vacant in order to deal with it, and, therefore, you must go to the tenant and settle with him before you approach the landlord. I put it this way: Suppose the Chief Secretary, following out the hon. and gallant Gentleman's views, writes to a solicitor in Galway, and says, "I want to get land for Government reclamation." Then the solicitor finds a landlord who is willing to part with land at a price, and he arranges with the landlord, but then he must also arrange with the tenant; the tenant is not going to give up occupation, as the hon. and gallant Member must know perfectly well. Whenever a railway is being pushed through the difficulty arises with the tenant, and not with the landlord, it is the exorbitant demand of the tenant that usually creates the difficulty. Therefore, unless the Government have compulsory powers to take land from the tenant for purposes of reclamation or planting, it is perfectly plain they will not get it at a price rational and decent for the Government to pay. But the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle has an alternative policy to this Government action. I understand him to say he would prefer to have the work done by the tenants themselves. Well, if that is the alternative, then the right hon. Gentleman has really no proposal to make, because every possible facility is now afforded by the law for the tenants carrying out these very operations.

Mr. J. MORLEY: I think the hon. and gallant Gentleman did not quite understand me. I said I did not believe in any gigantic scheme of Government reclamation, nor do I. I said, if reclamation is going to be carried out properly and promptly it should be done, with or without the assistance of the Government, by small men working for themselves in the first place.

*Sir J. COLOMB: I am exactly in accord with the right hon. Gentleman. I am quite opposed to the Government undertaking such gigantic operations at all, but I must also point out that the law as it is, is quite sufficient for the full development of the policy the right hon. Gentleman advocates. Take the case of a small tenant in any county in Ireland. Suppose I am a tenant, and want to reclaim a piece of land. I post a letter without a stamp to the Board of Works in Dublin saying what I want, the Board sends an Inspector and the Inspector draws the plans, everything is done for me. I am not even required to pay for his expenses, or his plans, or for postage. The Government give me professional advice, and advance the money on easy terms, spreading repayment over a large number of years, and I get the full benefit of the reclamation, which becomes my absolute private property. Well, I do not see that legislation can go any further, so that what the right hon. Gentleman says, in effect, amounts to this—that the law as regards reclamation is perfectly sufficient, and that there is nothing further to be done. But I think if the right hon. Gentleman really knew Ireland, and had travelled through Ireland, he would feel amazed and distressed at the amount of land there is in Ireland which is capable of being made infinitely more productive by the expenditure of very little capital and labour upon it. In view of the fact that all the land is in the occupation of tenants, and that the law as it at present stands does not produce the result that was hoped for as regards reclamation of land, there is no alternative; you are either to say the land is not to be reclaimed, but to remain as it is, or you must propose some new plan. For my part I agree with the right hon. Gentleman that it is not work for the Government; but I certainly think it is the business of the Government to assist in the operation of reclamation—not through the occupying tenant, but by some process of enabling capitalists and landlords to acquire from tenants neglected land for purposes of reclamation, making that land more profitable in the future. That, I believe, is the true policy; but you are immediately face to face with the difficulty, that the Land Acts of the last few years have stereotyped a condition of things adverse to reclamation and progress and disastrous for the future of Ireland. One further observation I wish to make on the statement of the Chief Secretary. I was rejoiced, greatly rejoiced, at the firmness with which he has resisted the pressure of gentlemen, Members of Parliament and others, to spend money on relief in a more reckless way. In Kerry, for example, drawing a comparison between what happened there in 1880 and what is happening now, I am bound to say that the right hon. Gentleman, while amply dealing with the distress existing, has saved us from that demoralisation which followed the reckless expenditure in 1880. I think we ought to be exceedingly grateful for that; and as regards the fact that he has not relied on local supervision, I may say that my observation of the expenditure of public money in Ireland, in my own district and other districts, has been that there has been the greatest jobbery connected with it, and this largely due to the fact that local supervision has been employed. I have not the acquaintance of Major Peacock and others engaged in supervision, but I think that in the supervision provided we have a safeguard against a repetition of that wasteful and demoralising expenditure.

(6.40.) MR. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): The hon. and gallant Gentleman has referred with regret to the absence of Irish Members from this discussion, but let him be assured that he will have ample opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with Irish Members in his own constituency at the next election. Now let me turn with a few words to the interesting statement of the Chief Secretary. Very full and clear that statement was, and very significant, inasmuch as it admitted the existence of severe and even appalling distress in Ireland. I expected an admission of that, and it would have been strange if that admission had been absent from the statement. We cannot shut our eyes to the reports in the public Press, and we know that the Lord Lieutenant and the right hon. Gentleman, in their capacity of high officers of State, have actually solicited the charity of the world for Ireland. As I listened to the statement of the right hon. Gentleman—his statement of the amount of distress, its severity, and the absolute inefficiency of the ordinary means to cope with it—I thought what a commentary that statement was on the effects of the legislative union between the two countries, that, after 91 years of incorporation with the richest country in the world, here is Ireland, according to the admission of the Minister at the head of Irish administration, a mere Lazarus among the nations. The right hon. Gentleman is a practical man. I do not know whether his reading lies much in ancient history, but has he ever looked into the speeches of Mr. Pitt at the time of the Union? Why, he assured the nation there would be something like a shower of gold falling into the lap of Ireland. He spoke with the earnestness of conviction, and showed with almost mathematical precision that if Ireland for 18 years before the Union had been prosperous the 18 years after the Union would have 12 times the prosperity. But here we are now in exactly the same position in which we were in 1846, and the inhabitants of Ireland are unable, according to the confession of the Chief Secretary, to support themselves in their own country without special legislative assistance. My right hon. Friend (Mr. J. Morley) is far too gentle a man to say what I am going to say now, but he will remember the dates. He has only gently and almost kindly touched upon matters I shall more directly refer to—the warnings we gave the right hon. Gentleman months before of the impending distress. If the Chief Secretary had accepted our warnings much of the suffering of the last three months would have been obviated, and the Irish tenants would be relieved from the pressure of severe distress, of which I admit the Chief Secretary has spoken to-day very properly, very feelingly. But so far back as the middle of July we knew distress was imminent, and again and again we referred to it in the House. I have asked a few questions, and in doing so I may have exceeded the usual limits accorded on such occasions, but my excuse for not considering the feelings of those around me is the knowledge of a starving population at home. From July onwards, so far as we were able, in season and out of season, did I and my colleagues bring the extent of the distress and the condition in Ireland before the right hon. Gentleman. The Secretary to the Treasury visited Donegal, not my constituency, but he went to Glenties early in September, and there was a large and influential meeting at Glenties to meet him. At that meeting the Recorder of Cork (Mr. Hamilton), a Conservative gentleman entirely out of sympathy with the people, but an upright, honourable, kindly man, declared that the cry of famine in Donegal was raised by agitators for political purposes, as did also Archdeacon Cox. Then the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury went to Achill, but instead of going to those who can give authoritative information as to the condition of the people (the Irish clergy) he went to Mr. Johnston, of Rosstown, and so we find afterwards the paragraph going the round of the Press that "Mr. Jackson considers the accounts of distress in Ireland very much exaggerated." Matters went on, and the Chief Secretary received letters from priests in my own constituency warning him of the state of the country. There were meetings of the Catholic clergy, there were letters to the papers, all announcing the distress to no small extent, and then there came a series of political meetings, held in Newcastle, where my right hon. Friend (Mr. Morley) referred to the Irish distress, and hinted that the Chief Secretary, who had not been in Ireland since the January before, would do well to go there to see the condition of affairs. The right hon. Gentleman retorted that it was not for my right hon. Friend to dictate to him from whence he should address his letters. Quite right, and my right hon. Friend never dreamed of such dictation; but, still, the right hon. Gentleman is the head of the Irish Government, and holds in his hands power on which life in Ireland depends. Then the *Times* took the war path. Letters appeared in the *Times* from a well-known hand, and *Times*' articles were written by a well-known hand—that of Mr. Wilson—to check the flow of subscriptions, and then on October 3 came a letter from the Chief Secretary, dated from Whittingham, to an American gentleman, with a view of stopping American contributions to Ireland, to the effect that there was no real distress in Ireland; that the amount of distress was exaggerated by agitators for political purposes. Yet though this was on October 3rd, in three weeks the right hon. Gentleman rushed down to Mayo, Sligo, and Donegal. The right hon. Gentleman had been judiciously prodded to this, and there was another effectual prod in the Eccles election. I wish the hon. Member for the Eccles Division were present now. The factor of Irish distress and the conduct of the Irish Executive formed the subject of debate on every platform throughout the Eccles election campaign——

An hon. MEMBER: And the Eight Hours Bill.

MR. MAC NEILL: Yes, and the Eight Hours Bill, too. I wish to be candid. On October 22 the result of the Eccles election was declared, and on the 25th came the expedition to Mayo. And the result shows the benefit that in some respects would accrue from a short period of Home Rule even in the hands of the right hon. Gentleman. So long as he remained in England he could not believe in the distress. The expedition returned in three days. It was planned, so far as Mayo and Sligo were concerned, by an eminent Judge, who has four times received promotion from a Conservative Government. During this tour a remarkable document appeared, a pastoral signed by nearly all the Catholic Bishops, declaring the distress imminent and the country in a desperate condition, and imploring the Government, while the people were in want of food, not to allow the Forces of the Crown to be used to deprive the people of their homes. It was impossible to pay the rent, and the Executive were implored to do as the President of the Board of Trade once did in the case of the Clanricarde tenants to stay the arm of the law in the interests of justice and humanity. Well, the right hon. Gentleman came back from Mayo and Sligo, and of that tour I say nothing. I only wish to refer to the visit to my own constituency. We have evidence from the hon. Member for Darlington (Mr. Fry) that the people are starving in Achill, and we have that in letters from the clergy of the district. I was looking over, a short time ago, a little volume, very amusing and, I may say, unconsciously comic, describing "Mr. Balfour's Tour," and in that is a picture of the right hon. Gentleman addressing the islanders, he promising them help, they responding with cheers and "God bless you!" Have those promises been fulfilled? No one can say so if what the hon. Member for Darlington says has any approximation to accuracy. The right hon. Gentleman, having returned to the Castle from Mayo and Sligo, thought he would then try Donegal, and started for that bleak and picturesque region. He telegraphed Mr. Olphert, the celebrated Donegal benefactor, of his movements, and I daresay the hon. Member for South Tyrone knew all about them; but the right hon. Gentleman did not do the Representatives of the constituency the courtesy of announcing his intention of visiting it, or invite co-operation in his object. On the 4th November, the day on which the Donegal tour began, and of which we knew nothing but from the newspapers, there appeared a letter from Dr. McDonald, the Bishop of Raphoe, in whose diocese Donegal is comprised, a public letter which must have drawn the attention of the Chief Secretary to the fact that Mr. Olphert was again on the war-path. He had unroofed and burned the houses of 150 of his tenants, and had obtained warrants for the eviction of 250 more, and this the Bishop referred to and to the fact that troops were proceeding from Derry to Donegal to carry out the evictions. I confess it seemed too strange to me that the right hon. Gentleman should be going to Donegal with the honest intention of investigating the distress, and at the same time that Mr. Olphert, the scourge of Donegal for 50 years, should be permitted to complete the ruin of people whose condition had evoked so much sympathy. So I went to Donegal myself, and I found great difficulty in catching the right hon. Gentleman. My hon. Friend the Member for West Donegal went also, and I think we spent a small fortune on telegraphing in our efforts to discover the whereabouts of the right hon. Gentleman. At length we found him, and I had an interview, of which the right hon. Gentleman has given at Liverpool a very amusing, very witty, though slightly inaccurate account. The speech on the occasion, so far as Donegal was concerned, harmonised with the traditions of the place in which it was delivered; it was bright and merry, and addressed to an audience in Hengler's Circus. He stated there that I went to Donegal to obstruct him in his work of benevolence. Nothing of the kind; I went there with the intention of showing him how and where his attention might be most usefully directed. I wanted to stay Mr. Olphert's hand. It was not an unworthy motive, but I knew it would be open to misconstruction. I had no intention of putting myself in antagonism with him; I simply wanted to obtain the highest influence to restrain Mr. Olphert's hand. I brought as awful a charge as could be brought by one man against another against Mr. Olphert.

MR. MACARTNEY (Antrim, S.): Mr. Chairman, I rise to Order. I desire to ask for the information of the Committee, and especially of Members on this side of the House, whether it is allowable on this Vote to go into all the details of the management of the Olphert estate and the relations of Mr. Olphert with his tenantry?

THE CHAIRMAN: It clearly would not be in order to take that broad view, but I do not think the hon. Member has gone so far as that.

MR. MACARTNEY: I desire to point out that in the Paper laid before the House with regard to the Poor Law Union in which Mr. Olphert's Estate is situated, not a single case of outdoor or indoor relief has been added since these occurrences.

MR. MAC NEILL: I will take no notice of the interruption except to say that when I come to the question of the Olphert estate on another Vote, I shall appeal to the hon. Gentleman, who was himself there when I was, to reply to the facts which I shall bring before the House. I am keeping strictly to the subject of Irish distress and its relief. Hon. Gentlemen will understand that distress arises from want of food; and if people burn other people's food and destroy it, there is a probability that food will be wanted. I brought this charge against Mr. Olphert publicly, and he could have charged me with libel if he had so chosen. I stated that the food and the crops of those people who had been evicted had been taken by Mr. Olphert's emergency men under the protection of the Royal Irish Constabulary——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

MR. MAC NEILL: I will not, then, say any more about that. I would, however, point out that as the finale of the Chief Secretary's tour in Donegal, no fewer than 250 families were deprived of food and housing.

MR. MACARTNEY: By the Plan of Campaign.

MR. MAC NEILL: Hon. Gentlemen opposite do not like to hear the truth. Falcarragh is one of the most desolate places in the world. I have been in the Karroo Desert, and I can inform the House that that desert is a Garden of Eden compared with Olphert's estate in Donegal. The right hon. Gentleman heard from me that these people were starving, but he did not take the trouble to go to Falcarragh, but ran away the next morning without even seeing Father M'Fadden, who could have given him the best information in the district. He saw Mr. Olphert, however, and the evictions took place two days afterwards. If the right hon. Gentleman had gone to Falcarragh, I believe he would have told Olphert, as the President of the Board of Trade when Chief Secretary told Clanricarde, "These people are starving, and I will not give you the forces of the Crown to assist in putting them out of their homes." The remarks of the right hon. Gentleman this evening have been fairly conciliatory, and I will give him some information in reference to the distress in one parish. In this parish no less than 66 able-bodied men have nothing to do. There is one district mentioned in the documents I have before me relating to the district of Killcar in my constituency, and it is described as the most congested district in all Ireland. The value of the potato crop there is given as one-fourth of the ordinary value, while the bulk of the potato crop is given at one-third of the ordinary bulk, and I have been told recently that nothing has been done for the relief of distress in this district. Nothing has been done, and the people are in a starving condition. The right hon. Gentleman knows the nature of the Donegal coast, and his experience has been that of every public man who has had to do with Ireland. The fishermen come and implore you for God's sake to do what you can to get them a few piers run out from the land, so that they can get out and in from the bays in stormy weather and send their fish to market. There is not in Donegal or on Tory Island the slightest attempt being made to provide piers. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary what he intends to do in the matter? He has £60,000 in his own hands, which he can spend as he likes. What does he intend to do in reference to Gweedore? Does he intend to leave the people to starve? They are in the unfortunate position of being on the Olphert estate, and Mr. Olphert has a son in Dublin Castle. When there is an eviction in the neighbourhood, this gentleman makes Olphert Castle a barrack for Her Majesty's troops. But the tenantry are human beings, although they are Mr. Olphert's tenants. One of the Government overseers went to Father M'Fadden in the autumn and asked him what, in his opinion, should be done for the people, and he recommended the construction of a certain road, and undertook himself to do it for £5,000. The work would cost the Government £15,000 if they undertook to do it themselves. What do they intend to do in the matter? They hold the opinion that Father M'Fadden is a gentleman who has used his spiritual influence over the people to their detriment; but the right hon. Gentleman should go to Gweedore for himself and see what has been effected by the exertions of Father M'Fadden, and I undertake to say he, for one, would soon change his opinion. I am sorry to say anything against the action of the right hon. Gentleman in his efforts to alleviate distress in Ireland; but I must remark that his own intelligence should show him the uselessness of giving doles for public works with one hand, while with the other he allows the scenes which have taken place at Falcarragh—the evictions, the burnings, the oppressions—to go on. The items devoted to Donegal were spent before the 8th February, when the right hon. Gentleman had an interview at Letterkenny with the Bishop of Raphoe, who told him that what had been done was illusory, and that unless some great and comprehensive scheme were undertaken there would be a danger of the people dying of starvation. Some of the people who ought to have been the recipients of relief are in a state of absolute destitution and starvation. Within two days of the Chief Secretary leaving Donegal some peasants were expelled from their homes. I saw them myself, and saw the food some of them were taking with them and preserving with the utmost care. Here are some of the potatoes. [The hon. Member exhibited to the Committee two or three extremely small potatoes.] They are miserable tubers like those described by the right hon. Gentleman's own Secretary as "more resembling plums than potatoes." Such is the food of the people who are being expelled from their homes because they cannot pay their rent, and I ask the right hon. Gentleman what he intends to do to relieve their distress.

*(7.18.) MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): I think there are two things with which the Committee need not trouble themselves. I do not think it has been gravely argued that an Irish Parliament could have solved all the difficulties which have been raised. In the second place, I do not think we are called upon to go into the question of evictions, whether in Donegal or in any other part of Ireland, for it cannot be successfully contended that evictions have increased during the distress, or even during recent times. Indeed, evictions have absolutely diminished, and therefore I need not trouble myself with either of those two arguments. There is one thing the Committee should remember in connection with this matter, and that is that we have had periods of distress in Ireland over and over again. I am not referring to the famine of 1846-7. We have had repeated periods of distress requiring the intervention of the Legislature or of private charity. Now, I want to know whether any man in this House is prepared to state that on any of those occasions one-half so much has been done for the people, or that it has been done half so well as on the present occasion? You may go back to 1880 when distress occurred, and two relief funds were brought into existence in Dublin. There was not half so much system or care in the administration of that relief as in that of the Government this year. Then, in 1886, we had the experiment tried by the right hon. Member for Newcastle in the West of Ireland, but I do not think the right hon. Gentleman himself would like to see that experiment repeated. The Island of Achill has been referred to, and described as having a population of 8,000. I really wish the habit of exaggeration could be kept out of these matters. As a fact, the population of Achill is only 6,000, and that is 5,000 more than the island is capable of supporting. Who is to blame for that? Certainly not the Government or the Chief Secretary. The fact remains that that island is overcrowded, and that it can only maintain a bare existence by labour in England and Scotland. Any English Member choosing to go to the Island of Achill will find distress there at any time. It is the normal condition of a large number of the people living there. It is, therefore, no argument against the Government for the hon. Member for Darlington to say that he has seen crowds of people there waiting for work, because he can see precisely the same thing at any period of the year, and will find abundant means to get rid of any money he may desire to dispose of in a charitable way. I was there myself in November last, and saw the people, and a most interesting people they seemed to me. They were coming home from the labour markets in England and Scotland in hundreds. I made inquiries, and found that they brought home something like £6,000. Now, that is a sum not easily disposed of in that island. Those people returned, not only with that money, but clothed with garments which they had purchased in England and Scotland. The potatoes there were all but a total failure—I do not believe there was a fourth of them good. It did not seem to me necessary to bring any of them to the House of Commons, like the hon. Member for South Donegal, for I did not suppose the Committae would require occular demonstration. What has been done? In the first place, seed potatoes have been placed within reach of these people. It is quite true they are paying for them, as I think it is right that they should. I do not think that charity in the way of gifts of seed potatoes in such cases as these is much appreciated or does much good. There is no reason why these islanders should not have fresh seed for the planting of this year. The hon. Member for Darlington says there were some rotten potatoes supplied, and the Chief Secretary admits that.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The rotten potatoes were not distributed.

*Mr. T. W. RUSSELL: I think the hon. Member for Darlington said they were distributed; but in any large distribution of potatoes under any scheme, or system of inspection, we are bound to get dishonesty of that kind. In addition to that there has been a railway made at a distance of eight or ten miles; there have been relief works opened in the island; a road there between Dooagh and Keel—one of the most execrable I ever walked upon—is being repaired; and other works are being carried on. I heard the hon. Member for Donegal say the people cannot get to the railway. I said to the people when they were pleading with me to use my influence with the Government and the Chief Secretary to open the railway, "If this railway is made you will get a good deal of work." Then, even those able-bodied young men who had just come back from working in Scotland shrugged their shoulders and said, "It is too far," although the works were only seven or eight miles from their homes. Huts, bedding, and food have been provided for them, but these people think seven or eight miles from their own doors too far to go for work. What are the facts at the present moment? We have heard a good deal about the distress on the island. I say it is normal—though deplorable. But I am informed that there are seven huts, with bedding and everything ready, vacant at Newport now. The directors sent for 50 labourers to the island the other day, and only got eight. The hon. Member for Darlington went to the parish priest and got those tales of distress, and no doubt he was quite right in the course he took; but how does he come to say these measures are not sufficient, and that the Government is not doing its duty? I myself have had doubts whether the Chief Secretary's measures of relief would come in time for the pinch in the spring. I was afraid the works would not be in operation in time, but I am glad to say my fears have been falsified. I think the measures taken by the Chief Secretary with respect to the money expended on relief works, the providing of seed potatoes, the construction of railways, and the system of inspection established during this time of distress were admirably and perfectly made, and I believe that the people of Ireland are profoundly grateful to the Chief Secretary for what he has done.

(7.29.) Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I think every attention should be given to such a *Daily Graphic* statement of the hon. Member. The hon. Member has travelled at considerable expense all over Ireland, and like many another Gentleman who misrepresents Ireland, he never loses an opportunity of trying to depreciate the sufferings of the people of Ireland, and to do harm to the country which gives him shelter. The hon. Member has talked about evictions having ceased in Ireland. Well, we are at the present time on the eve of a census being taken in Ireland. It is known that our population has diminished very considerably in Ireland. They are not taking into consideration the number of evictions which have been going on through the length and breadth of the land since the present Chief Secretary came into office. Under his shelter—under the ægis of this god of eviction—there do not remain many more people to be evicted, and the consequence is that the hon. Member tries to make much of what is, practically speaking, very little in this the last term of the power of the present Government. We know that the majority of Irish landlords are not at the present time so prone to persevere in evictions as they were, because they know that the day of retribution will come, when they will have to give an account of their stewardship. The Chief Secretary, in the course of his very able speech, told us that he was able to ask the House of Commons for anything he wished, and that he would not be refused. That, unfortunately, is true, because a majority of the House of Commons at the present time support the policy of the Government. The hon. Member for South Belfast called attention to the fact that a few Sundays hence the Census would be taken, and it would be found that the people who had been working in England, Scotland, and Ireland, had taken back to the Island of Achill, as the result of their labour, £6,000, which would be sufficient to keep them during the winter. But I can state with certainty that considering the number of women and children there were, and the congested state of the Island, £6,000 will not be sufficient, especially in face of the failure of the potato crop, to keep these people during the winter. I do not accuse the hon. Member of want of compassion; I trust no honest gentleman lacks compassion; but I can assure the Committee that in some of the districts of Achill there is a near approach to starvation, and the £6,000 will in no degree help to relieve the tension. I know that a great deal of benefit has come from some of these relief works, but they are not administered in a proper way. An hon. Member who sits for an English constituency, because no Irish constituency would return him, suggested in regard to reclamation of the land that it should be made not in favour of the tenant, but, naturally enough, in favour of the landlord. We hear these things said occasionally in the House of Commons, but few Members have the bluntness to declare them in such an unequivocal way as the hon. Member did. The Chief Secretary whom I love and revere, our beneficent Chief Secretary, is, naturally enough, trying to do his best under difficult circumstances. His policy is one of whips and sweet buns, chains and soup, prison and Indian meal. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that he finds it necessary to give the unfortunate people who require relief a stone of meal per diem. And in that he is following the policy of his predecessors in the Island of Achill, where the people were provided with soup on condition that they changed their religion. To this day the buildings can be seen in the Island of Achill where the people were supplied with soup on changing their religion. The right hon. Gentleman is following that policy; he is trying his uncle's 20 years' of coercion together with this policy of relief, in the expectation that Irishmen will forego their nationality and accept what he gives them in return. Many of those poor people who require relief are called upon to pay exorbitant rents, and if the right hon. Gentleman really means to do good work, instead of following his policy of "souperism," he would try to effect a reduction of these exorbitant rents. The information we have about the light railways is scant. In my opinion these light railways——

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The railways will come on the next Vote.

DR. TANNER: I have been led into the mistake by reason of the Chief Secretary having alluded to them. At the present moment we have only to deal with relief works. In connection with these I find that only one member of a family is employed at 12s. a week —a sum which has to support some seven or eight people. In many cases that is not enough. He has alluded to fraudulent starvation cases; but I regret that he did not furnish us with the names of the clergymen who had been imposed upon. We are, however, accustomed to the word "anonymous" in many of the statements of the right hon. Gentleman. He has frequently given us statistics of boycotting, but has never favoured us with the names of those who had been boycotted. I hope, before the Debate closes, he will be able to furnish the names of the rev. gentlemen who have been imposed upon. Attention has been called to the planting which has taken place at Lough Boyle. Last year I introduced a small Bill dealing with planting in Ireland. I took up the subject believing that if tree planting were properly carried out in Ireland, many good results would arise. Places now sterile would thus become productive; while employment would be given to a large amount of labour. I was pleased to hear the right hon. Gentleman admit that the English system of forestry was inferior to that which is pursued on the Continent, particularly in Germany and France. A gentleman in Galway, a Mr. M'Dermott, whose acquaintance, I believe, the right hon. Gentleman has made, has paid great attention to this subject, and notably to the Forestry of the West of Ireland; and I think if the right hon. Gentleman would read his pamphlets, and follow the advice he has tendered to the Royal Society at Dublin, much good would result. The late Sir G. Coulthurst, who was a Member of this House, planted Ballyvourney and Rathcoole, I believe, with success; and if the Chief Secretary could but see his way to planting many other districts which it is impossible to make productive otherwise, much benefit might accrue to our impoverished people. The right hon. Gentleman alluded to the fuel famine of last year, which, undoubtedly, produced a great deal of trouble; surely he is aware that when times become troublous and the people are sorely in want of light and warmth, those are the very times that are pitched on by many landlords in Donegal and the North of Ireland for trying to promote their turbary rights as a means of extracting rent. We hear many strange things in this House; and I was pleased this evening to find the right hon. Gentleman somewhat sympathetic. It is in the memory of most Members of the House that many of us who had been amongst our constituents, and knew their condition, saw that there was danger ahead, and that something should be done to meet it. But at that time we were laughed and scoffed and jested at as alarmists. Now, however, they are able to realise the fact that our people are in danger of starvation. When I went to Mid Cork last November, I found that Inspectors had been sent to various places threatened with starvation, places where the poverty of the people was almost unendurable. I then heard that a gentleman, Mr. T. S. Porter, whose report I hold in my hand, had visited the town of Rathcoole shortly before, and had stated that the crops in that district were fairly good. Hearing this, I made it my business to follow Mr. Porter through the district he had visited. I went into the very same fields and got the people to point out the places where he had dug, and show me the kind of tuber he had seen. I had potatoes dug from the same places, and out of every 12 of these tubers I brought away six. Out of the whole of these I assure the House there was not one that was really fit for human food. At Macroom, where Mr. Porter had had potatoes dug for him, a friend of mine, a member of the medical profession, and a Conservative gentleman experienced in agricultural matters, gave me a solemn assurance that the potatoes were not only unfit for human food, but that the people who ate them would possibly bring about some kind of typhoid fever or other serious illness. From inquiries I have made on this subject, I find that there has been a considerable increase of fever in some of these districts consequent on the consumption of this class of potatoes, notably in the poorer and more congested districts. I followed Mr. Porter from Macroom to Inchegeela, where there is very beautiful and picturesque scenery, but where, I regret to say, the character of the soil is very bad. In every field I visited there was proof positive that not one quarter of the crop would be available. Nevertheless, although relief works are elsewhere being offered, nothing has been done for these people, who are now suffering great privations, beyond what is obtainable from private charity. Where the right hon. Gentleman has himself seen what is taking place, something is being done, but in the districts I have mentioned nothing is being done. In the Mushra district, between Macroom and Millstreet, the state of things is nothing short of lamentable. I shall never forget my visit to a poor labourer's cottage on the slopes of Mushra, where we saw a poor woman boiling potatoes for dinner. I asked her to let me see what she was putting into the pot, and I assure the Committee that no English labourer would give to his pigs what was then being boiled for the consumption of that family. I regret that the right hon. Gentleman trusts so much to his Medical Inspectors. Doubtless men like Colonel Slade would do much, but he and Mr. Porter and others have too much thrust upon them. The right hon. Gentleman would have done better had he not trusted quite so much to his own system, and had not done so much to conciliate the clergy and medical men of the country. Has the right hon. Gentleman consulted the dispensary doctors of Ireland? Hon. Members may say, that in putting this question I am actuated by by feelings in connection with the order to which I belong, but that is not the case. My reason is this, that if you want to ascertain whether real distress exists, you must go to the medical men who have to deal with the diseases of the people, and to whom the people go for parochial advice. That is not the right way to do it. The Catholic clergymen with whom I have come into contact, are not men likely to have put themselves in the humiliating position of begging assistance from the right hon. Gentleman.

We listened with great attention to the Chief Secretary. He did not tell the House whether these people who through no fault of their own, but by the visitation of Providence have become paupers, and been driven to receive outdoor relief are to be disfranchised and their votes taken away from them? I hope he will answer that question. So far as I can see in distributing the relief the Chief Secretary has erred in many respects. To a certain extent some good has been done, no doubt, but I think, for instance, that the light railways will not pay their way.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, order! That is not relevant.

Dr. TANNER: Then, Sir, I will leave that subject. There is one district in which nothing at all has been done. I allude to the district of Donoughwon, and I venture to say if anyone would take the trouble to drive through it he would become convinced of the terrible poverty of the people. I have called attention to their condition time after time without effect; but I hope that even now something will be done on their behalf. I am not often able to praise the Chief Secretary, but I am bound to say that in the Castle Hayden district a considerable amount of good has been done. Still the wages paid are, in the case of large families, only just enough to stave off starvation, and I think they might reasonably be increased. I am afraid, however, that the right hon. Gentleman has trusted too much to the Reports of his Inspectors as to the condition of the various districts in Ireland. I followed one of the right hon. Gentleman's Inspectors through certain parts of the country, and found that in many places where the Inspector reported the potato crops to be fairly good the greater part of the potatoes were not fit for human food, and I was informed by medical experts that if the people were to consume such food they would probably become victims to fever. I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that, instead of trusting exclusively to the reports of his Inspectors upon the state of the various districts of the country, he should apply for information on the subject to the clergy and to the medical men who reside in them. With regard to the classes of officers by whom the works are being superintended I should like to say a few words. As to the local surveyors, I have nothing whatever to urge against them. No doubt they are well fitted for the task. I say little either for or against the engineer officers, but it is the constabulary to whom I feel I must refer. Why should the right hon. Gentleman, knowing the unpopularity of the police, have made them the paymasters of these poor people? The fact is that by his policy he has made them unpopular, and now he seeks to whitewash them by making them ministers of relief. He gives them the power to pick and choose whom they will relieve, and they take care to relieve the land grabbers. There is an old saying, "Scratch a Russian and you will find a Tartar," and I venture to assert that if you only remove the epidermus of this magnificent scheme of relief you will find it is intended to subserve political interests. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will find out a way of doing more solid work in the interests of Ireland; that he will cease to do evil and learn to do good.

(8.14.) Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I am growing sick of this system of relief works, by reason of the way in which they are managed, for jobbery and demoralisation prevail all around. We must, however, hope for better things by and bye. The congratulations showered by the hon. Member for South Tyrone on the system of the Chief Secretary are, I think, premature. A few days ago I called attention to cases of distress in the County of Roscommon, and the Chief Secretary said he was inquiring into them, but he has as yet done nothing. I now wish to call attention to the dire distress prevailing in Gweedore. Not a single seed potato has been sent there, neither has any relief works been started. This is owing to the apathy of the Guardians, an apathy to be accounted for by the fact that the Chairman of the Poor Law Board is Mr. Olphert. I am afraid that it is his hardness of heart which has prevented the Chief Secretary from relieving the distress there. Finally, I should like to say, I do not know anything more cruel than to make the police the instruments for distributing the relief seeing how they are hated in Ireland, and I feel confident that many people would sooner starve than accept relief from them. It is a cruel and horrible idea.

(8.20.) DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): We wished very much at the time these grants were first submitted to Parliament that we had been able to dispense with them, but still relief was necessary, and I cannot help saying after the statement we have listened to to-night that as far as the limited funds permitted, the right hon. Gentleman has certainly endeavoured to carry out the work satisfactorily. The only thing I regret is that Parliament could not see its way to grant more money. I am one of those who think that any money voted by this House for the relief of the poor in Ireland is not given in the way of charity, but is simply a restitution of money which Ireland has for many generations been improperly deprived of. The main reason why I regret that the House has not seen its way to vote more money for these relief works is, that although much of it finds its way into the pockets of contractors and others who are not in need of it, a considerable amount does reach the very poor. I give the right hon. Gentleman full credit for having selected those districts which stood most in need of relief, but still the amount which the Committee are asked to vote to-night is but as a drop in the ocean; and a great many districts remain—among them some in the county which I have the honour to represent—in need of this help. Much might be done in the towns by getting rid of the filthy hovels in the back streets and substituting for them houses which would be a credit instead of a disgrace to a civilised people. The right hon. Gentleman, in speaking of the difficulties with which he had to contend, stated to the House—not, I believe, for the purpose of prejudicing the case of these poor people who are often very much in need of work—instanced cases in which men had applied for work while they were drunk. Of course, we know that unfortunately this disease of drunkenness is very prevalent among the lower classes of the Irish people, but I would submit, in extenuation, that it may in part be attributed to the want of food, for they sometimes have to go without dinner and supper three or four days in succession; and then a pint of bad porter would quickly upset a person in such a condition. If the right hon. Gentleman were to live under such conditions he would not be able to perform his duties as he now does with such satisfaction to himself. I again say, however, I am glad to see he has got rid of much of the red tapeism which usually surrounds these undertakings, and in the administration of relief has taken a good deal of care to prevent the injury which often succeeds the doling out of charity. I ask the Chief Secretary not to leave the people altogether in the hands of the contractors; and, above all, I impress upon the right hon. Gentleman, if he is wishful that these funds should be justly administered, the necessity of entrusting their administration to some other body than the police. I do not complain of the police, but I know that in the district in which I live there is an idle policeman to about every 20 inhabitants, and during the last five or six years I have never known the policemen do anything, for the simple reason that they never had anything to do. The hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) will bear me out that many of the people who sorely want work would rather starve than go to a policeman to get a day's employment. I trust, therefore, the Chief Secretary will pause before employing policemen practically as the masters of these funds. The right hon. Gentleman compared the wages paid in England with those paid in Ireland, and told us that the unskilled labourers who work upon these railways get wages which vary from 11s. to 13s. a week, and from a stone of meal a day, which, according to him, amounts to 11d., 5s. 6d. a week. Is it not astonishing that there are to be found in any country men willing to work for 11d. a day, or 5s. 6d. a week. I confess that if I were in the position of one of these poor men I would never work for 11d. a day while a sheep or a bullock was to be found grazing on the land of the country. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of 11s. and 13s. a week as a high wage for work upon railway embankments and the like. I would remind him that in the county of Dublin the wage of an ordinary labourer, of a man who drives horses, or gathers leaves, is from 12s. to 13s. a week besides lodging, milk and other things labourers often get from their employers. When these poor people have to go 7, 10, and 15 miles to work, I think the wage the right hon. Gentleman is paying is very poor indeed. I am inclined to think it is the old story over again: the greater portion of this money will find its way into the pockets of the wily contractor who hovers about this House and Dublin Castle, and the poor labourer will get the worst of the bargain. I do not complain of the Chief Secretary, I think he has done his utmost to administer these funds in a just and legitimate way, and to hurry on these works in times when there was great need of them in Ireland; but again I impress upon him not to employ the police, which is really an insult to the people. I have a word to say as to the cause of the distress in Ireland. I believe bad government is the primary cause of distress in every country, but I am disposed to think that in Ireland the secondary cause of distress is the potato. I believe you will have famine and distress in Ireland so long as the people depend entirely upon the potato, and I suggest—and one day or another if this Parliament does not an Irish Parliament certainly will act upon the suggestion—that every man in Ireland who has land to plant anything in shall be obliged to discard, partly, at any rate, the potato, and to plant for himself a crop of wheat. If some system could be devised whereby people would be compelled to plant a crop of wheat, and the people could feel that the crop would be safe from the landlord or the bailiff, famine would never be known again in Ireland. The right hon. Gentleman told us he thought of establishing some works for the reclamation of land, and he made one remark I was particularly glad to hear. He told us he was enabled to go on with the scheme of reclamation because of the fact that a number of landlords in Ireland are unable to make good their title. That is what we have been trying to persuade the people of this country all along. We know that the great majority of the landlords of Ireland have no title at all to the land, and, therefore, we have arrived at the conclusion that eventually we shall be able to get back every sod of the land and use it for the purpose of the people. (8.40.)

(9.15.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

(9.18.) DR. TANNER: There are several points which have not been touched upon in the course of this Debate, and there are several questions that deserve specific answers. To what extent has the right hon. Gentleman availed himself of the local knowledge of the priests in the distressed districts in Ireland? I have already elaborated this point, but no answer has been vouchsafed. Are the police entrusted with the administration of the whole funds? My hon. Friend the Member for South Longford (Mr. Fitzgerald) certainly did very well in hammering this point home, but I put the question specifically. Are the police entrusted with the administration of the whole funds; and, further, is it true that the famine-stricken condition of the people is being made the excuse for paying starvation wages? By the statement of the Chief Secretary we learned that the people employed on relief works are getting, in some cases, shelter and fuel for cooking and 7s. a week; but, said the right hon. Gentleman, in certain instances it is in the power of the administration to give them a stone of meal, which he showed is worth 11d. a day, which amounts therefore to 5s. 6d. a week. Therefore, it would seem that advantage is taken of the condition of the people to pay starvation wages. To speak plainly, is it an alternative open to the police if a man has strong political views opposed to the Executive—if he is, say, a campaign tenant—is it in the option of the police to decree that that man is to receive a stone of meal in lieu of 7s. a week and shelter? Another point arises in connection with local relief works—are alien artisans employed? If reports are accurate, this has been the case. Aliens have been employed to the exclusion of poor and respectable men in the small towns of the West of Ireland. This is not fair, and I should like to know under what circumstance it is allowed. Something we have heard of what is being done on Tory Island, and we should naturally suppose the name would evoke the sympathy of a Conservative Government. We have long been anxious to have a lighthouse established there; but we have still need of enlightenment. We have heard of the difficulties gunboats have to contend with, and what is really the condition of affairs on these small Islands. It seems to me the right hon. Gentleman is making the time-honoured mistake of putting the cart before the horse at Clare Island, Inishkea, and undoubtedly at Achill the pressing need is for piers, and road making and repairing are secondary works. Off Clare Island, in Achill Bay, in Black Sod Bay there are magnificent fishery banks, but the fishermen are unable to avail themselves of these advantages because they have no accommodation for their boats. I know from personal experience the difficulty of embarking and landing at Achill. There is a pier, I know at Achill Sound, but it is unapproachable except at high tide.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

DR. TANNER: Yes; I am travelling a little beyond the Vote; but all I want to do is to draw attention to the fact—that money would be much better spent in constructing piers in Achill and other places than in making and repairing roads. It is important that the expenditure should be directed in the best manner, for the amount asked for is very small, the right hon. Gentleman telling us he has had regard to the interests of the British taxpayer. I am glad to hear that, though my experience in Committee of Supply is that the British taxpayer has often scant consideration, and millions are voted for dubious purposes upon very vain reasons. But if the right hon. Gentleman, instead of putting so much trust in the system he vaunts, and in which he is upheld by the hon. Member for South Tyrone, would avail himself of the local knowledge of the clergy, his efforts for the alleviation of acute distress would be much better directed. One point more in reference to piers. If the Reports of Inspectors are to be relied upon, it is upon the seabound congested districts that the failure of the potato crop has been most felt, and the distress among the people is most acute. I know from personal acquaintance with these districts, from fishing and yachting visits in times long past, as well as in more recent visits, the cry of the people is for piers that they may be able to prosecute the fishing industry. But here I go through all the relief works enumerated and find only one estimate for such a purpose—a pier and approach road at Schull, and two other estimates for repairs of piers. But still the people of these seabound districts reiterate the cry "Give us shelter for our boats that when the land harvest fails us we may reap the harvest of the sea." What, comparatively, is the use of making these roads at Mulranny and Achill Sound beyond the present means of finding employment? You only get a kelp crop from Achill. Let the right hon. Gentleman turn his attention in the direction I have indicated, and he may confer a lasting benefit upon the people, and accomplish a work upon which he may be congratulated in future years. I content myself with putting the questions I have referred to, and I sincerely hope I shall have an answer.

(9.32.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The next Vote is one on which I expect some discussion, and I believe the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle intends to raise an important point with regard to it. Perhaps, therefore, the sooner we proceed to that Vote the better. The hon. Member opposite has put three questions to me which I think can be answered in three sentences. It does not rest with the police to determine who shall be employed on the works; the rate of wages is not determined by the police; and, with regard to the priests, I am desirous of obtaining all the information I can of the various localities through the priests, or any other trustworthy source. The other questions raised hardly call for reply. The hon. Member for Donegal spent a good deal of time in discussing details, and I will not follow him in that, but he said that the Chief Secretary awoke to the fact that something ought to have been done in November last. In that the hon. Member is greatly mistaken. It was in July last that I asked the House to pass the Light Railways Bill against the opposition of hon. Members below the Gangway opposite. It was in August last that I had many important interviews with Inspectors of the Local Government Board on the subject of the condition of the potatoes, and it was in September that I made arrangements for the purchase of seed potatoes. The tour which has so exercised the mind of the hon. Member for Donegal was made in the month of September. As to the statement of an hon. Member that the works of the Island of Achill are insufficient, all I can say is that if it is proved that they are insufficient they shall be augmented. The fact, however, pointed out by the hon. Member for South Tyrone should not be lost sight of, that a higher rate of wages has been offered on relief works in Achill than was ever offered before, and that, though there are many men who could avail themselves of the opportunity up to the present time, hardly any advantage has been taken of it. As to the potatoes, the most minute examination has been made by the Inspectors appointed for the purpose. They have inquired into over 40 cases in which bad potatoes are alleged to have been given; but the result of the inquiries has been to show that there was an error in the Report. There have been bad potatoes, but they have not been distributed, and the potatoes which were distributed were not bad. There is the case mentioned by the hon. Member for Darlington of the woman who showed him potatoes which he says were rotten. Well, I notice that the Inspector reports that in one case of complaint made by a woman he made an inquiry, and the woman showed him some bad potatoes, which she said she had been supplied with. He found that the potatoes were bad, but that they were potatoes which the woman had grown herself, and which she tried to palm off on him. I fear she found the Member for Darlington a more credulous witness than the Inspector. The potatoes shown were not the potatoes supplied by the Guardians. As to the cases brought forward by the hon. Member for Galway, I must point out that there appears to be very little difference in the matter of the relief granted by the Union this year and last.

*(9.38.) Sir J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I listened with great attention to the right hon. Gentleman's opening speech. He laid great stress on the difficulty of obtaining accurate information as to the poverty and absolute need of the people in the distressed districts, but the whole drift of his information seemed to me to depend on the statements of the police. But I would point out that the people consider it a disgrace to be seen speaking to a policeman. Yet it is on police statements the right hon. Gentleman relied.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: No, their statements were simply supplementary.

Dr. TANNER: The principal.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: Not at all. Hon. Gentlemen opposite may be interested to know that the police reported some heartrending cases.

*Sir J. SWINBURNE: What I was pointing out was that if the right hon. Gentleman's words meant anything they meant that he relied on the reports of the police.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: And I say the hon. Member is mistaken.

*Sir J. SWINBURNE: I am very glad to hear I am mistaken, for how can the population have any sympathy with the police, whom I have myself seen assist at evictions? I am sorry to see that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary has left the House. I wish to point out to him what I saw in a district which he carefully avoided when in Ireland, namely, the district of Gweedore and Falcarragh. At Falcarragh the police actually stoned the people in their own houses, so anxious were they to assist in turning the starving people out of their miserable cabins. I saw 150 police going out to assist in the evictions, and they assisted in storming the houses. How could the people have any sympathy with those officers? Why, the people there say that there is not a man amongst them worth his salt who has not been to prison. And yet the right hon. Gentleman says he gets his information supplemented by statements of the police. The people would rather starve than go to the police with their tales of distress. As to the right hon. Gentleman's statement that the people in many cases have acted fraudulently in dealing with seed potatoes, one can very well understand a woman with a starving family of little ones around her going to almost any length —even the length of false representation —to obtain a few potatoes for food. Then, as to the remarks of the hon. Member for Cork, who urged on the right hon. Gentleman the necessity for the construction of piers. I have lived on the south coast of Ireland for a year and a half myself, and I know how much works of this kind are required. The existing piers have all been built in wrong places by persons who have had no local knowledge. I cannot imagine a stronger argument for Home Rule, or Local Government, whichever you are pleased to term it, than the present position and state of repair of a large proportion of these fishing piers.

(9.45.) DR. TANNER: With regard to accurate information, I would call the attention of the Government to a statement in the Return of 1890, referring to the district I represent. Mr. T. S. Porter says—

> "My Report on this Union not being completed, Mr. Doran will also report upon it.

Then, on page 47, Mr. Doran says—

> "I did not interview the clerks of the Union, believing that Mr. Porter had done so.

It is said that too many cooks spoil the broth, but it seems as though this truism could with equal force be applied to Government Inspectors. Though I have pointed out, time after time, the condition of things which exist in my district, we find Inspectors, when they are sent down there to make inquiries, neglect to do their duty. To whom are we to lay the blame of this failure to obtain accurate information. Are we to expect it from the Civil Lord of the Admiralty, who, when he was driving through a district in Ireland, had his glass in his eye, and looking at some fine turniptops said to the car driver, "Well, there is no failure in that potato crop." We are told that the accurate information does not come from the police. Then from whom does it come? I think we are entitled to an answer to that question before the Debate closes.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS I.

2. Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £136,200, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for Expenditure under 'The Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889,' and upon certain Railway Works not yet included in that Act."

(9.50.) MR. J. MORLEY: Now that the first Vote is passed, I wish to call the attention of the Committee to a matter on which I put a question to the Secretary to the Treasury last year. I then asked the right hon. Gentleman for copies of the bargain or arrangement that was made for the construction of the Connemara Light Railways between the Treasury and the Midland Great Western Railway Company of Ireland. I did not then understand the answer given, nor have I been better able to understand it since from any information I have been able to gather. The Chief Secretary himself told us that there was to be a competition between promoters. He said that it was not intended by the Light Railways Bill to exclude private promoters, but merely to enable public companies to carry out the schemes of the private promoters. Now I should like to have from the Secretary to the Treasury a clear account of what actually took place between the Treasury and the Midland Great Western Company. In a passage of the speech of the Chairman of that company to the shareholders on the 12th August last, there occurred what everybody who heard of it at the time, and everybody who has heard of it since, regard as a very remarkable statement. Sir R. Cusack said—

> "The entire sum for constructing these two lines from Galway to Clifden, and from Ballina to Killala, will amount to something like £314,000, without ever paying one single penny of dividend on it. There will be no debenture stock issued to cover it, no preference stock issued, no original stock. We shall not pay any interest on the loan. Every penny that we get will go into the pocket of the company, and I trust will largely add to our dividend."

Now, if that is a complete account of the transaction, what is happening is this: that a large sum of public money which has been voted by Parliament has been handed to the Midland Great Western Company in connection with the construction of the lines, and out of that money the company will naturally expect to make, and, in fact, have announced that they will make, a considerable addition to their annual dividend. I wish, therefore, to know from the Secretary to the Treasury what the real terms of the bargain were, and whether any chance has been given enabling private promoters to compete with one another, so as to bring down the cost of construction, or whether an extravagant amount has been given to the

Midland Great Western Company without any advantage accruing to the taxpayer in consequence. That is the point I put to the Secretary to the Treasury, and I understood the right hon. Gentleman to say that the lines for the construction of which agreement has been made with the Midland Great Western Company have been started under what he calls preliminary contracts, with the object of employing labour at the earliest possible moment on the works. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will explain what he means by preliminary contracts, to which the Chief Secretary also referred in his opening speech to-night. Then the Secretary to the Treasury went on to say that—

> "He understood that the company was about to invite tenders from a considerable number of selected firms for the final contract."

What is the difference in terms between the preliminary contract and the final contract; and, next, have tenders been invited from a considerable number of selected firms, or has the Midland Great Western Company been allowed to carry out the details of the final contract according to their own intentions and designs? Now, I observe in the contract made with the company that the ordinary clauses of forfeiture on non-conclusion of contract have not been inserted, and I do not see that the Government have taken powers, in case they are dissatisfied with the execution of any portion of the work, for executing the works themselves at the expense of the company. That is yet another point that demands explanation. As it is, the transaction certainly looks one of the most dubious and unbusiness-like proceedings that I have ever known, even in Irish administration, and I ask for an explanation—first, of the preliminary contract, then what is the relation between preliminary and final contracts; whether private promoters are at any point invited to compete, or whether the whole transaction has been a close one; and, finally, whether, close or open, it has had the effect of handing over to a Railway Company a large sum of money voted by Parliament.

(9.57.) Colonel NOLAN: I do not profess to know the details of a great number of the items in this list of railways, but I know very well the details and the circumstances surrounding the larger railway—that between Galway and Clifden. I have always supported the Government in this question of light railways, and have addressed some complaints to them on the subject, but those complaints have always been that they have not gone far enough. They are doing a good work in opening up these western districts, which hitherto have had a lower civilisation than the rest of Ireland. They have always been in a chronic state of poverty and distress. As to the question of the dividends that may accrue to the Midland Great Western Railway Company, I confess I do not attach as much importance to it as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle. The hon. Member for Longford opposed all the railways of this kind, and he did this so persistently that the struggle lasted till 5 o'clock in the morning; but it was pointed out that although the action of the Government in giving the Galway line to the Midland would entail an expense of £30,000 to the county, the Government had done it to a great extent to please the hon. Member for Longford, who had said there ought to be a broad gauge instead of a narrow gauge. On the broad gauge being conceded the hon. Member for Longford withdrew his objections. Since then the position of County Galway has very much improved, because instead of having to pay £30,000, the Government has to pay it. Consequently, Galway is placed in a much superior position to that in which it stood before, when it was only offered a narrow gauge line, with a large liability attached to it.

*The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): I am extremely glad to have the opportunity of answering the question which the right hon. Gentleman has asked so fairly. It is an important question, because it ought to be made clear what the arrangements have been with the Midland Great Western Railway Company. In answering a former question I did not quite catch the right hon. Gentleman's meaning. The right hon. Gentleman confused me, because he spoke of competition between promoters, not between contractors. They who were spoken of as promoters were those who went to the Grand Jury for the presentment. In this case there happened to be promoters who had gone to the Grand Jury and got a presentment. These promoters I am afraid I confused with the Midland Great Western Company, who subsequently became promoters and subsequently got their presentment. At that time I could not see how there could have been competition between promoters, because there was no competition between promoters, and that was what my answer was intended to convey. The point now raised is whether there would be, or there has been, any competition as regards the construction of the works. The right hon. Gentleman has quoted a statement made by the Chairman of the Midland Great Western Company in August, 1890. At that time, no doubt, the Chairman might have been under the impression that the £314,000 which he spoke of was a sum which would construct and complete the two lines from Galway to Clifden and from Ballina to Killala. In that statement he also spoke hopefully of the prospect of earning dividend from that outlay. It is not surprising that the Chairman should be hopeful as regarded the dividend to be earned by his company from this expenditure. As to the prospects of earning a dividend from the working of the line from Galway to Clifden, it must be remembered that it would become a feeder to the company's system. So far as the Government contribution went, whether the Government had given it to the construction of a line to be made by the Midland Great Western Company or by any other company, the result would be the same as far as that company is concerned, namely, that they would have an increase of dividend without expenditure of money, and in consequence of the expenditure of money by others. At a meeting held in February last the Chairman of the company said there seemed to have been a misapprehension of what he had said as to how they were getting this money. It had been inferred that they were to get the money at once and to put it to their own account without any supervision whatever; but such was not the case, because the Board of Works would see that the work was done by the contractors and that the money was properly spent. He added that they had invited tenders for one line and would invite them for the other. This coincides with what the Chairman of the company said to me when the agreement was made with the Treasury. As to the preliminary contracts, the Chief Secretary is anxious that the work should be commenced at as early a date as possible. At the time the agreements were made plans and drawings had not been got out, and therefore it was not possible to invite tenders. After much consultation plans were agreed upon, under which the Midland Company made a preliminary contract with a contractor on a schedule of prices for doing certain portions of earthwork in preparation for the line, and so employing a large amount of unskilled labour. The works on the line have been progressing under this preliminary contract, and in the meantime plans and specifications for the works have been in course of preparation. The Board of Works have nothing to do with the preparation of the plans and the drawings, but the plans have to be submitted to them and approved by their engineer, and the works have to be completed to their satisfaction. While these plans have been in preparation tenders have been invited for the Westport and Mulranny line, and one has been accepted, and I anticipate that before long the company will be in a position to invite tenders for the Galway and Clifden line. I have made clear what is the difference between the preliminary contracts and the complete contract. The former is a schedule of the rates and prices per yard, and is for work which could be done by unskilled labour; and so soon as the complete plans and specifications can be made, tenders will be invited to complete the works. Since that time further information has been obtained as to what may be the possible cost of the lines, because the Midland Company have made their statement to the Grand Jury, and subsequently they obtained from the Privy Council their Order in Council for the making of the lines. An estimate was presented to the Grand Jury of the estimated cost of the works, and I find that instead of £314,000, as named in the first statement, the cost will be £373,000 and some odd hundreds. I am afraid that this is not a novel experience; and though these estimates have been exceeded, I do not say for a moment that the increased amount is for work identical with that to which the first estimate applied, because the first estimates were by the promoting company, who, without capital or security at their back, could not have undertaken to execute these works. We have preferred to adopt the plan, and we have adopted it throughout wherever it has been possible of working through the existing companies; or if we had proceeded with the promoting company, that company would have required a working agreement in perpetuity with the existing companies for the working of their line. The arrangement made with the Midland Great Western as to the Galway and Clifden lines was an arrangement under which the Treasury agreed to contribute £5,500 per mile. I confess I never believed the line could be made for that sum; nor do I think the Chairman of the company anticipated otherwise than that he would have to make some further contribution for the construction of the line. With regard to the security taken by the Government for the due expenditure of the money, I may say that all expenditure has to be vouched expenditure. I do not expect that we shall be called upon to pay a less amount than the total sum we have agreed to pay. Our contribution is not nearly the whole cost of the line, and, therefore, if the Midland Great Western for its own purposes is prepared to spend £100,000 or £140,000 in excess of the Government contribution on the three lines for which agreements have been made, I think that is the best possible security that the Government can have that the line will be constructed in the cheapest possible way, coupled with efficiency. I think we may rely that a great Railway Company like the Midland is not likely to spend any money of its own unless it be absolutely necessary for the purposes of making a good line; and our object all the way through has been to endeavour to make efficient lines that will give satisfaction.

MR. J. MORLEY: What is the estimate per mile now?

*MR. JACKSON: I am afraid the estimate is more now. The line, I believe, has been a little shortened, because there have been fresh surveys. The estimated cost of the Killala line is £65,937, to which the Treasury have agreed to contribute £44,000. The estimated cost of the Westport and Mulranny line, in connection with which there are heavy engineering works, including a viaduct, is £191,000, to which the Treasury contribute £131,400. The Clifden line, which has been given at 48 miles, and is now a little shortened, will cost £307,500, towards which the Treasury contribute £264,600. The total estimated cost is £564,500 in round figures, towards which the Treasury have agreed to contribute £440,000. I think that is the best security we can have that the Midland Company will bring all their energy, experience, and skill to construct the line as cheaply as possible, because they will be saving their own money. I may say that the agreements were carefully drawn by competent counsel, and I think there is not much likelihood of the Midland Great Western Company doing anything to forfeit their contract. Their whole resources are responsible for the work, and I think, therefore, as far as we are concerned, we have no need for a single moment of anxiety that any difficulty will arise. The right hon. Gentleman will see by the Order in Council that the Midland Company have taken power to raise £100,000 in capital towards the expenditure which will become necessary on these lines, and that, of course, goes to confirm the figures and estimates I have already given. I hope I have satisfied the House that we shall not be running any risk, and that the agreement will prove satisfactory as regards the construction of the line. If any gentleman thinks the proportion we contribute is too large, I have a complete answer to give. It would have been impossible to have had the line constructed for less money by anybody else, and therefore there was no option. I do not know whether hon. Members desire that the whole of the charge should fall on the barony, because that is exactly what would have happened if we had not adopted this course. I am quite satisfied that the arrangement we have made is best in the interests of the Government, of the district, and of the Treasury—best in the interests of the Treasury because we have made a contract with a responsible company, who are bound to complete for the sum we have agreed to pay; for we are certain that we shall meet with no excess on these estimates. I think that in itself is a very great advantage so far as the Government is concerned. I am not prepared to deny—in fact, I admit at once—that the Government have dealt with this question of railways in a broad, liberal, and even expensive way, but I maintain that it was the truest economy to make bargains with responsible companies, so that they would be certain to be carried out, because if arrangements had been made with companies promoted without capital, and they had failed to complete the work, then the Government would in the ordinary way have been called upon to complete. It may be said that the barony would have been called upon to complete, but the barony to be charged is not a rich one and has large arrears of rates, and I have seen sufficient of Irish companies and Irish works and arrangements made with Irish Local Authorities to satisfy me that the arrangement made in this case was the best in the interest, not only of the district, but in the interest of economy. I should like to take this opportunity of saying one word with regard to the Board of Works. I think it is only right that I should say that all through these negotiations there has been put upon the Board of Works a pressure of work most unusual and very trying. I had an opportunity during nearly seven weeks of what I ought to call my vacation, while I was superintending the negotiations for these agreements, of seeing the pressure that has been put upon the Board, and I am bound to express my sense of gratitude to them for the able and competent manner in which they have carried out all details. It was new work, done under great pressure of time, and I may say that it is a result of the policy of my right hon. Friend the Chief Secretary that we have been able to use these works in aid of giving employment which otherwise would have had to be given independently, and to be provided at considerable cost without producing such good work. I feel bound, therefore, to express my thanks to the Board of Works.

(10.34.) *Mr. J. MORLEY: I am sure that we all agree that the right hon. Gentleman has devoted himself to these works with ability and in a spirit of self-denial, but I submit that if Parliament had known at the time the money was about to be voted that it was to be given to a Railway Company without competition, in fact that the terms were to be dictated by the company itself, the House would have thought twice before sanctioning any such proposal. The Government did not put that proposal rightly before us. It was distinctly expressed that there was to be competition, and it stands to reason that unless there was to be competition the bargain was sure to be an extravagant one; and I do not blame the Railway Company. The right hon. Gentleman admits that the terms made by the Government are broad, liberal, and expensive, and, for my own part, I maintain that the more they are scrutinised, the more plain will it become that they are even excessively extravagant, and that a more unbusinesslike transaction was never entered into. We do not know how the sum to be handed over to the Midland Company was arrived at; it was simply and solely on the demand of that company, and has not in any way been tested by competent persons.

*Mr. JACKSON: I ought to have mentioned that a Court of Inquiry has been held in each case under competent authorities, whose duty it was to check the estimates, and we have also had the estimates of the Board of Works checked by the most competent engineers.

Mr. J. MORLEY: May I ask whether any sort of change has been made in the estimate as the result of this inquiry?

*Mr. JACKSON: It was enlarged.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Was the Report of the Commissioners submitted to the Board of Works, and examined and passed by them?

*Mr. JACKSON: Certainly.

Mr. J. MORLEY: At all events, it appears that the estimate fixed by the Railway Company was accepted by the Board of Works and the Treasury without alteration.

*Mr. JACKSON: We found that the bargain was the best we could make, after the most careful inquiry into the whole matter.

Mr. J. MORLEY: Now we understand. What has happened is this: Towards undertakings, which will cost £564,000, the Treasury are going to contribute £440,000. That sum of £440,000 is, in fact, given over to the

Railway Company by way of free gift. Why have the Government done that? Surely it is not the ordinary way of proceeding. The right hon. Gentleman says that we shall get a good strong line of 5ft. 3in. gauge. But is a 5ft. 3in. gauge required? I have heard a good deal about light railways, but I have never understood that a 5ft. 3in. railway was a light railway. The Government ought to have put the work up to tender before giving it to the company, but instead of doing that they have practically accepted the terms of the Midland Great Western Company. I submit that what I said in January, *i.e.*, that the Government had allowed that company to dictate terms which are excessively severe for an article which is not what Parliament has expected, and which we have not bargained for, is correct. Then what security have we that the Midland will not throw this line on our hands?

*MR. JACKSON: They have undertaken to work it in perpetuity.

MR. J. MORLEY: Under what penalties? I maintain we have no assurance against that line being given up, and I submit that the Government ought not to have given this sum of £440,000 in the way they have done.

(10.43.) MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I think that the right hon. Gentleman has forgotten the Debate we had upon this question of light railways in 1889. The right hon. Gentleman seems to think that it is a new policy to get the great Railway Companies to work one of these lines; not only is it not a new invention, but it is part of the policy of the Act of 1889, and it is the point on which, for my own part, I think the policy of the Government is incomparably in advance of anything which has been done by their predecessors. I observe that there is not a single Irish Member in the House, except the hon. and gallant Member for Galway.

DR. TANNER: Order, order! I am here.

An hon. MEMBER: There are four.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: With the exception of the hon. and gallant Member for Galway, there is not any one present, as far as I know, who represents any county which is interested in these lines, and the opinion of the hon. and gallant Member for Galway is that the arrangement is the only tolerable one. The accusation of the right hon. Gentleman opposite has been that we have given too much, not to the County of Galway, but to the Midland Great Western Company. The right hon. Gentleman has forgotten the history of these light railways. If anything has been brought home to the mind of any one who has studied the question of these Government subventions, it is that any county is only too delighted to enter into any bargain to pay the difference between the traffic receipts and the costs of management in order to get a railway made, but when it is constructed they grumble at the county cess they have to pay; there have been, and I fear there may be again, difficulties in this respect. The moral of that is not to have a county cess to make up the working expenses of the line, but a responsible Railway Company whom it will pay to have the branch line. Then the railway system will be self-supporting and on a business basis. The right hon. Gentleman seems to look forward to a time when the Midland Great Western Railway will repudiate its obligations. He might as well expect the North-Western or the Great Northern Company in England to repudiate their obligations. It would be just as absurd. But with a small promoted company managing its finance somehow in London and getting a guarantee to make up any deficiency there is no security that the line will be made, or, when made, that it will be worked. Even if it is worked, it may be found that the big company on which the branch line depends will not do its best to promote the interests of the branch line; and then the Treasury will again find itself in the position it is to-day, of being the owner of some miles of derelict railway, from which the rails have been dragged up from time to time, and constituting a sort of monument to the incompetence and folly of the arrangement under which the line was constructed. It may be a debatable question whether Parliament ought to make these great subventions for the construction of railways in the poor districts of Ireland; but Parliament has deliberately adopted this policy, and I am perfectly certain that the only way of carrying it out with safety to the taxpayer, and to the locality, is to insure that the line shall be worked by a responsible company. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle seems to suppose that the Treasury could have had better terms from another company. There is no evidence of that. A saving of £10,000 on the whole amount might have been effected if a narrow gauge railway had been constructed. But how would such a railway have worked in connection with the Great Midland system? Every truck of goods from Galway to Clifden would have had to be transshipped. To get for merely an extra £10,000 a broad-gauge line worked by a responsible company, instead of a narrow gauge line worked by an irresponsible company, is the best bargain the House of Commons has ever made. If the right hon. Gentleman will examine in cold blood the transaction, which, perhaps, only my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury with his great knowledge of railway affairs in England could have carried through so well—transactions which I wish to say I heartily endorse—he will find that no better transaction for the locality or for the Treasury was ever entered into in the long history of Irish loans.

(10.50.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): The first contention of my right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle was that railways which are called in this scheme light railways are not accurately described. I think we have just cause of complaint on that ground. I might have had no desire to complain of the making of light railways, and so have stayed away from this House to-night. Yet now we are being asked to vote money for works not correctly described. The Chief Secretary, in answer to my right hon. Friend, says the policy of the Government in having heavy lines is a wise one. But surely light railways would have suited just as well, and have been less expensive. Take the County of Donegal, the Stranorlar or Glenties line; or take the Killybegs line. I am told that at Killybegs there are about 200 people. Surely their requirements would have been amply met with a light line.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Both the lines named are light lines.

MR. LABOUCHERE: And yet the right hon. Gentleman said it was preposterous to make a light railway.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I said nothing of the kind. What I said was, it would not be wise to have a narrow gauge line running into an ordinary line.

MR. LABOUCHERE: And the right hon. Gentleman admits that the narrow gauge system is working satisfactorily in Donegal. I do not see why you want these expensive lines. The people have not enough to eat, so they are not likely to have any produce to send by train; and they have no money, so they cannot buy things which would have to be brought to them by train. The whole thing is a farce and an absurdity. I have the warmest sympathy with the Irish, and am perfectly ready to give them Home Rule to any extent. One reason for this is that if the Irish do not soon get Home Rule the English people will be left without a shirt to their backs, all their money having been voted in Irish subsidies. It seems to me these Government schemes are only put forward in order to try to induce the Irish to give up their demand for Home Rule. Hon. Gentlemen opposite who come strolling in after dinner intent on voting the money may be impatient, but we intend to have an explanation about every shilling asked for; we intend to protest against this expenditure, and in many cases to vote against it. My right hon. Friend the Member for Newcastle complained, in the second place, that the Government had entered into these contracts recklessly. I agree with him. In these arrangements which the Treasury have made the shareholders of the great Irish Railway Companies and not the particular districts are benefited. This is another instance of the Government legislating at the expense of the masses for the benefit of the classes. One day it is the publican, the next the clergy, then the landlord, and now the railway shareholder who are to be benefited at the expense of the English taxpayers. I think that what has transpired to-day thoroughly justified our action in spending a whole night before Christmas in opposing these Bills. The scheme is a thoroughly bad one, and it is perfect hypocrisy to say that it is to give immediate relief to the poor

Irish. How many men get employment on these railway works?

*MR. JACKSON: About 8,000,

MR. LABOUCHERE: On the railroads alone?

*MR. JACKSON: Yes.

MR. LABOUCHERE: They receive 10s. to 13s. a week each, so that you are only spending about £40,000 a month out of this £440,000 grant upon the working classes. The rest of the money will go into the pockets of the shareholders, who belong to the classes and not to the masses.

*(11.0.) SIR J. COLOMB: The hon. Member for Northampton has talked about the farce and absurdity of the position taken up by the Government in this matter, but he has himself illustrated the farce and absurdity of a Member discussing a question connected with districts the very names of which he cannot pronounce, and as to which he openly professes utter ignorance. Was it wise and right for the Government to make these arrangements with the great companies or was it not? If I give a short account of one of the railways of which I have intimate knowledge, it will sufficiently explain why I say the Government was absolutely right, in the interest of the district and of Ireland generally, to take the course they did. I speak of the Headfort and Kenmare Railway. For years the district has been trying to get a railway; and as to the question of a light or heavy railway the hon. Member for Northampton cannot have taken the trouble to look at the speech the Chief Secretary made when he introduced the Light Railway Bill. In that speech the right hon. Gentleman distinctly stated that the Bill covered both a 5ft. 3in. gauge and a narrow gauge, and that he proposed to leave it to the discretion of the districts whether they should adopt the 5ft. 3in. or the narrow gauge. The position in regard to the Headfort and Kenmare line was this: The Government gave as a free gift £50,000, and the country guaranteed £60,000 on the security of the county cess; but the condition was most properly imposed that the railway should be worked. It could only be worked by the Great Southern and Western Railway, because there was no fund out of which any other body could provide the rolling stock. An inquiry was held, and it was found that £110,000 would be the cost of the line. We only had that sum, and when that sum was spent the line would not have been worked unless the Great Southern and Western Company approved of it. There was no prospect whatever of our being able to make the line to the certain satisfaction of the Great Southern and Western; and had not the arrangement been entered into with that company, the result would have been that the district would have been saddled with a guarantee of £60,000, and we would have had a railway badly constructed which the Great Southern and Western would not have worked. The money would have been lost, and the district would have been without railway communication. I was a member of the Local Board, and I know there was not a man on the Board that was competent to make a contract to work a railway or to carry out the scheme. The first thing the Board set itself to do was to try to give a high salary to an estimable young gentleman who should act as secretary, but who had no knowledge whatever of railway business. Therefore, it is apparent that unless the Government came to an arrangement, the district was in great danger of spending its money and not getting a railway. It was with the greatest possible satisfaction that everybody, from the parish priest downwards, heard of the determination of the Government to take the matter in hand and deal directly with the Great Southern and Western Company by setting aside the Local Board. If the Government had not taken that course, Parliament would have voted money in vain for this particular line, the money would have been spent, the county would have been saddled with guarantees, and a railway would have been constructed which it was certain the Great Southern and Western Railway would not have been able to work, and the policy of Parliament would have been defeated. Now, however, we have solid guarantees that the line will be properly made, because it is the interest of the Great Southern and Western to make it, the £110,000 which the Board of Inquiry fixed as the amount which ought not to be exceeded will not be exceeded, and the company

will be bound to work the line for all time. Therefore, speaking from this particular instance—and I think it is applicable to all other lines—a great benefit and boon has been conferred on these districts, because the districts will get the value of their money, and the people are grateful to the Government accordingly.

*(11.11.) SIR J. SWINBURNE: I agree with the last speaker that the people are very grateful to the Government; if you give people half a million of public money, they ought to be grateful. The Galway district was very poor indeed; if it was not, it would make its own railway. Yet there is to be a broad gauge railway constructed, and in consequence of the reduction of the gradients resolved upon, the engineering works will be enormously increased. The North Eastern, one of the best managed railways in England, made a railway the other day to a sparsely populated district of Northumberland, with a gradient of 1 in 50, but in a poor district in Ireland, where the people will not have the money to pay a third class fare, the gradient is to be reduced to 1 in 60. The Secretary to the Treasury argues that if the line were not broad gauge, the engines of the Midland Company could not run on it, and it would be useless. There is a broad gauge line up to Londonderry, and yet the branch lines running into County Donegal are of narrow gauge. Therefore the argument of the Secretary to the Treasury will not hold good for one moment. This business is a gross job. We are throwing away nearly half a million sterling, for we shall never see the money again, or get any interest upon it. The Secretary to the Treasury says the scheme is not opposed by the Members for Galway. My constituents would not object to be relieved from the public purse. I think the House has been very badly treated, for some months ago we were asked to vote money for light railways, and now we find that one of the railways to be constructed is to be of the most expensive kind.

*(11.15.) SIR J. POPE HENNESSY: I think the greatest credit is due to the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury for the businesslike proposal he has made to the House. I venture to ask the Chief Secretary to consider the possibility of extending his operations, and at the same time of inducing not only the Midland but the Southern and Western Railway Companies, who will benefit—and nobody objects to it—by these transactions, to reduce their rates both for passengers and goods. For many years—since 1866—there has been before Parliament the proposal that the State should purchase the Irish railways. The time has come, I think, when the Government might consider the question. The two practical questions we should like to see solved are the reduction of the rates and the purchase of the railways.

(11.16.) MR. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): I was one of the Members who opposed the Light Railways Act; but I confess I am surprised to find to what extent Her Majesty's Government have availed themselves of that Act in order to increase the expenditure. I am not surprised that hon. Members from Ireland should compliment the Government for having spent so much money in Ireland, One of the chief arguments used by Her Majesty's Government when they introduced the Light Railways Bill was that there was to be an addition to the ordinary railway of the country, not in the shape of heavy railways but of light railways, and I am astonished to hear the Chief Secretary ask how is it possible to work a light railway in conjunction with a heavy one? I expected the railways made under the Bill would be practically of the same character as the ordinary railways of Ireland; because if you attempt to work any railway in conjunction with the ordinary railway system, you must make such a line as will not only carry the wagons but the locomotives of the railways with which the line is connected. I, from experience as a railway man, know that General Hutchinson will not pass any line or bridge which he is perfectly sure will not be equal to the strain. Notwithstanding what the Chief Secretary has said the Light Railways Act, which was passed last Session, is nothing more than a misnomer. I scarcely think it was right for the Government to put forward an estimate of £50,000, and then come to the House and ask for a supplementary estimate of £136,200. This is hardly a Supplementary Estimate: it is rather a main estimate. It is just in keeping with the action of Her Majesty's Government, in financial matters, for I have watched their action very closely, and I confess I never place any faith in any of the financial proposals they put before us. The statement was made by my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) that branch railways seldom pay, and I think in the main he is right. In this country, as a rule, such railways do not pay, and I fail to see why we should make any difference between the railways of Ireland and those of England. I have opposed the expenditure of money in connection with the Government of Ireland when that Government is conducted as at present, and I think the only safeguard you can have that such money will be judiciously and carefully expended in Ireland, is to provide for its expenditure by a Government whose interest it is to deal with Ireland alone. I protest against the expenditure of this money in the way proposed by the Government, and I think the Government have no right to enter into contracts which they know exceed the Estimates put before this House, practically, without consulting this House. They have entered into a contract for £564,000, £440,000 of which they have pledged themselves to pay. I cannot conceive what advantage the taxpayers are to get from this expenditure, and I protest most strongly against it. I listened to the speech of the Financial Secretary with great care, and I did not hear one argument which justified the expenditure. I should like to know under what conditions the agreement was made with the Railway Company, and why there was no competition for the contract? I thoroughly agree with what was said by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle (Mr. J. Morley), and I feel so strongly on the matter that I shall not be content unless I give my protest against the Vote by taking a Division.

*(11.24.) MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): On this question Members who come from Ireland cannot be expected to take the same line as some of the English Members who have spoken. I was one of those Irish Members who at the end of last Session kept the House till very early one morning in opposing the Bill of the Government and I am bound to say I think the course the Government has since taken abundantly justified us in keeping the House up all night on that occasion. We did so because the scheme of the Government in connection with the Galway and Clifden Railway involved a local guarantee. I spend a considerable amount of time almost every week in corresponding with various constituents in different parts of my division who are oppressed by various kinds of local guarantees in connection with railways. There is one guarantee for the Great Northern Railway Company, another for the Midland Great Western, and a third for a special company, which made a light railway under the Act of 1883. In each of these cases the guarantee system has been found to work unsatisfactorily. The local control is not sufficient and the people of the district are dissatisfied. We protested last Session against the Government scheme because it involved a local guarantee. The Government has abandoned that local guarantee, and I think that if, by keeping the House up on the night I speak of, we saved the poor taxpayers of Galway £30,000, we have no reason to be ashamed of ourselves. I have examined with some care the various Provisional Orders made under the schemes of the Government, and I have noticed that in most of them any sort of local control over the companies to which these large grants are given has been abandoned. Under the Act of 1883 there is a system by which the barony elects a certain number of directors of the company. I do not think the local control, thus provided is by any means sufficient or that it works satisfactorily, because the local directors are always swamped by the representatives of the shareholders. It is, however, better than nothing. In the case of the Downpatrick and Ardglass Railway, there is a local guarantee large in proportion to the amount spent on the railway, but there is no sort of provision for representation of the taxpayers on the Board of the Belfast and County Down Railway Company. Many of the people who will be taxed for the construction of this line live in distant parts of the County of Down, and will get no benefit whatever from it. Surely, under these circumstances, the least that

could be expected was that some provision should be made for the representation of the locality on the Board of the Company. The question has been raised, whether it is better for these lines to be worked by big or by small companies. I have in my own constituency an example of each system, and I am bound to say, on the merits, that I prefer the system the Government have adopted. The big Railway Company will always get the benefit of a feeder whether it belongs to the big company or not; while I daresay it is possible that the very astute gentlemen who manage the Midland Great Western Railway have got rather the better of the Government in their bargain, on the whole I confess I prefer the system of working these lines in connection with a big Railway Company to that of setting up small companies with expensive offices.

*(11.30.) SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): The hon. Member who has just spoken has expressed his satisfaction that Irish ratepayers are not to be made responsible for the result of this expenditure, and I understand that generally he approves of the policy of the Government. Now, my experience is that when I see Irishmen on both sides agreeing to a Government proposal, I say, "woe to the British taxpayer." Under such circumstances, we may expect the perpetration of jobs; and again I feel inclined to say, "Oh for an hour of the late Mr. Biggar." He was a man who thoroughly understood these things, and was ever ready to expose jobbery in connection with them. It may be a question whether it was better to pay moderate sums for plans never fulfilled or to devote larger sums to construct Irish railways by jobbery. I do say the House of Commons has been misled. Last year the Government made a comparatively moderate proposal, but now they bring forward a much greater scheme, under which these railways will be constructed by the large companies, and five-sixths of the money will be paid by the British taxpayer, for whom there is no prospect of the return of a single farthing. Why are these things done so readily in Ireland as compared with the cautious, hesitating way in which the demands of the Highlands of Scotland are met? The Irish Members are apt at agitation, and can make themselves troublesome and disagreeable, and so these things are sops to quiet them. I deeply regret that the views of the late Mr. Biggar no longer find an exponent. The hon. and gallant Member for Galway (Colonel Nolan) does not disguise his satisfaction, and in that satisfaction we see danger to the pockets of the British taxpayer.

(11.33.) MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I do not wish to detain the Committee; but I may explain to the hon. Member for Northampton that Glenties is the most populous of the towns in West Donegal: that is the centre of the stocking knitting industry; that there is a considerable amount of this work done, and there is a difficulty in getting it sent away. For this, among other reasons, there is no doubt that this particular line will be a boon to the people of West Donegal and a national benefit, even though the undertaking may cost the taxpayers something for the time. I am quite sure that the policy of the Government for the relief of Irish distress commends itself to the Irish people whatever their public opinions may be. But I take the opportunity of asking the Secretary to the Treasury why it is that North Donegal has been left out of these advantages? The claims of the districts of Inishboffen and Cardonagh have been urged, but I do not find that they been recognised. As there is no Representative of North Donegal present, and I had the honour of being its Representative in two Parliaments, I venture to ask the right hon. Gentleman if there is any prospect of railway works in North Donegal being commenced?

(11.35.) COLONEL NOLAN: The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, who, in contradistinction to Irish Members, always makes himself so agreeable in the House, has invoked the memory of our lamented colleague, the late Mr. Biggar, in opposition to these proposals. But Mr. Biggar objected, as his successor in the representation of Cavan has, because they were narrow gauge railways projected. ["No, no!"] Hon. Members who contradict me do not recollect the speeches he made here. I know he also objected to the local guarantee, but now that principle is practically eliminated, or confined to only a few rich baronies. Let me recall to the memory of the Committee what occurred last year when the light railways proposal was before the House. I find it recorded in *Hansard* that the discussion which commenced at 2 o'clock in the morning with an Amendment of the hon. Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) was continued until 5.18, when the hon. Member withdrew his opposition, using these words—

> "Inasmuch, however, as the Government are giving the Galway people a better line than I supposed—that is to say, a heavy broad gauge line—I shall not persist in my opposition, but will leave the Government the responsibility of rejecting my advice."

It all turned upon the difference between broad-gauge and narrow-gauge lines, and I think it is rather hard that the Government, having been strenuously opposed because they proposed narrow-gauge lines, should now be abused because they propose the broad-gauge.

(11.36.) DR. TANNER: Remarks have been made upon the Irish Members praising the Government for what they propose to do. We are doing nothing of the kind. But, of course, we are ready to take from the Government all that we can get. The Government have so bungled Irish affairs as to bring about starvation, and now they must pay for their mismanagement. No gratitude is due from us; and from time to time we have pressed the claims we have on the Government in great emergencies like this. I have pressed the Government for three light railways within my own county; but though they were passed by the Grand Juries, I have only had success in one instance. As to this Galway and Clifden line, I think it will be more satisfactory to have the line worked by a large company, and they will probably manage it better than a small company could; and we have seen so much bungling in tramway administration, that perhaps this offers a better prospect. But, of course, we know that the reason why the Government have made this contract with the Great Western Company is not for the benefit of the people, but that they may be able to put a certain amount of money into the pockets of their political friends the landlords. But, even in this Galway and Clifden line, they have followed the worst course. They should have followed the line of the sea coast tapping the fishing villages and districts where there is most population, instead of carrying the line from Galway to Oughterard across a series of bogs, and adding to the cost of construction. Then take the Westport and Mulranny line. I pressed the Chief Secretary to extend it to Achill, and this has been done at an expense of £8,000; but that line cannot pay unless the Government do more. I endeavoured earlier to press upon the Government the necessity of building piers, and I want to connect the two works—railways and piers. There will be little traffic over the Achill line unless a pier is built. Stopping at a point in Achill Sound is not enough; there is not sufficient traffic to pay. The annual migration of Achill men to find harvest work in England will not assist much. So I must press home the practical importance of piers for creating a fishery traffic. There is no agricultural produce to be sent from Achill. It is a black and barren district, producing no crops beyond a few potatoes and a small quantity of oats to feed a few horses there. Unless you go further and build piers to encourage the fishing there will be nothing for this railway to carry. There is another line—the Baltimore and Skibbereen—a very short line that will certainly pay, and this for the simple reason that the efforts of the Rev. Father Yates have been successful in establishing a fishing industry at the latter place. I warn Her Majesty's Government that on this western coast piers are required if there is to be any hope of railway traffic. Let them construct these, and in doing so let them not be guided by the advise of engineers from London and Dublin, otherwise we shall have only more monuments of incapacity like Lewisberg Pier in Clewer Bay, which is useless to the inhabitants. I hope the Government will, in addition to these railway works, build piers that the people may have a means of getting the full advantage of the fisheries.

(11.45.) MR. JOICEY: I think hon. Members from Ireland have rather misinterpreted references from this side of the House. I am not surprised that hon. Members advocate the spending of British money in Ireland for any purpose which provides labour for their people. No doubt, if similar expenditure were necessary in any of our constituencies, we should support such a proposal in the interest of our constituents. I do not find fault with the action of Irish Members, but I do find fault with the action of Her Majesty's Government, who have proceeded in a most unbusinesslike way. Here is a sum of £560,000 to be spent over one railway, when the impression produced in the House was that for such a sum a complete network of railways might be constructed in Ireland. But a line of 50 miles is to cost £560,000.

COLONEL NOLAN: No, no; not half that.

*MR. JACKSON: I explained just now it was for three railways.

MR. JOICEY: Of what length?

*MR. JACKSON: 74 miles in all.

MR. JOICEY: Yes; over £8,000 a mile! I do not think that is the kind of light railway the House contemplated when the Bill was passed. The Government applied to the House for £50,000, not having the slightest knowledge of how they were going to spend it. I gather from what has been said by the Secretary to the Treasury that it was spent in digging here and there, and making plans and sub-sections of the lines. But everyone who has had experience in these matters knows that it is the custom of contractors to take contracts for the whole of the work. The whole of the proceedings of the Government have been most unbusinesslike, and I feel this so strongly that, by way of protest, I move the reduction of the vote by £1,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That £135,200 be granted for the said service."—(*Mr. Joicey*).

*(11.49). MR. CRAIG (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): As one who spent a great deal of time on the Standing Committee on Trade and Commerce in 1889, when the Bill known as the Light Railway Bill was sent to it; as one of those who remembers how a measure of 21 pages was reduced, by a series of very clever tactics and artifices, to three or four pages; as one of those also who remembers the significance attached to the words light railways in those days, I confess I am surprised that those who sit on the Treasury Bench should tell us that included in the meaning of the term "light railway" is a line with a gauge of 5ft. 3in. I am certain from my knowledge of the proceedings of that Committee, from which I was never absent for a moment, not even when Ministers reinforced their own strength and when pressure was applied such as had never been applied to a Standing Committee before, and I hope never will again—such pressure as was made matter of comment in the House and observation by the highest authority — these matters should be brought to the remembrance of the House that the House may see how, to use a sporting phrase, we have been "jockeyed" for the sake of getting the British taxpayers money for—I will not say nefarious purposes, for the House has sanctioned it—but by a series of artifices we who are here to watch the administration of the national funds have been deceived, and this by gentlemen who call themselves Unionists. [*Interruptions.*] They obtained the wretched little Bill of 1889 for Light Railways, and now they come and tell us that means a line of 5 feet 3 inches. [*Interruptions.*] Yes, this may be a laughing matter to the Government and their supporters. We have been told, in reference to one line, there are no funds but there are promoters. No capital but a promoter. Yes, that is just the point, there are promoters—[*Interruptions*]—but where does the money go? Does it go to the assistance of distressed people? Precious little of it. One hon. Member has advocated the construction of a line because it will increase the wages of his constituents by 2s. 6d. a week, but is that a sufficient reason to satisfy the representatives of English, Scotch and Welsh taxpayers? Are they to provide the money for such a line as that the late Mr. Biggar mentioned—where the engine, being unable to pull the train up an incline, the passengers got out and tried to push it. [*Interruptions.*] It is very funny, no doubt, that the money of British taxpayers should be expended in this way. The money goes into the pockets of promoters, and promoters can afford to smile. Why are we called upon to provide money for these railways when the Act relates to light railways? What is the definition of a light railway?

*Mr. JACKSON: A light railway as I should have thought the hon. Member would have informed himself from the proceedings before the Committee, may include a railway which may be 5 feet 3 inches.

*Mr. CRAIG: I have no hesitation in giving an emphatic contradiction to that statement. I have practical experience in these matters. The normal gauge of English railways is 4 feet 8½ inches, and beyond that the line is known as a broad railway. The right hon. Gentleman has no practical acquaintance with these matters, and has been led into the use of misleading terms. A light railway means, light rails and narrow gauge, light work and a light engine to run upon it. If the right hon. Gentleman will refer to the Act of 1889 he will find that a light railway is defined as including a tramway, did the right hon. Gentleman ever hear of a tramway 5 feet 3 inches? The term tramway was included, so that part of the money might be used for carrying out the object of the Tramways Act of 1883. The whole proceedings in Committee was misleading in the highest degree, and I say they were intended to mislead [*Interruptions.*] I know the facts, but hon. Gentlemen do not; and I shall not change that opinion. There were 24 pages of clauses, and when we got into Committee 21 of these were torn out. [*Cries of* "Divide!"] Yes, I will divide the Bill; I will show how the 21 pages were divided from the Bill as it was sent to the Committee. These pages contained safeguards, introduced, as we were told, by the Treasury to protect the pockets of the taxpayers. [*Interruptions.*] As representing the British taxpayers, I do not intend, on a matter of this importance, to be roared down at this time of night. Two sub-clauses took the place of these 21 pages. First, there was a proposal for dealing with companies that were solvent, solid, and substantial, which occupied three pages of matter.

It being Midnight, the Chairman proceeded to interrupt the Business.

Mr. William Henry Smith rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

(12.0.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 146; Noes 49.—(Div. List, No. 83.)

Question put accordingly, "That £135,200 be granted for the said service."

(12.15.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 46; Noes 152.—(Div. List, No. 84.)

Mr. William Henry Smith claimed, "That the Original Question be now put."

Original Question put accordingly.

(12.25.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 150; Noes 40.—(Div. List, No. 85.)

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow.

Committee to sit again to-morrow.

SUPPLY REPORT.

Resolutions [9th March] reported (see pages 494-569), and agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the years ending on the 31st day of March, 1890 and 1891, the sum of £596,025 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, the sum of £9,036,700 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow.

Committee to sit again to-morrow.

LAW AGENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL
(No. 69.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday next.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL
(No. 40.)

As amended, considered.

Mr. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to move after Clause 1, the insertion of the following new clause—

(Construction of 53 and 54 Vic. c. 60, s. 1.)

"The expression 'technical education' in Section 1 of 'The Local Taxation (Customs and Excise) Act, 1890,' shall be deemed to include both technical and manual instruction within the meaning of the Technical Instruction Acts, 1889 and 1891."

The only object of this clause is to make it quite clear that the County Councils may utilise the money they obtain under the Excise Act of last year for manual instruction as well as other forms of technical instruction. Owing to the difference in the wording of the two Acts, some doubt exists in the country on the subject, and I hope therefore my proposal may be accepted.

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): I am very doubtful as to the necessity of inserting this clause. I see that the intention of my hon. Friend is to provide that this measure and the Act of 1889 shall be construed together. If, however, my hon. Friend refers to the Act of last year he will find that the residue of the money is to be applied within the meaning of the Technical Instruction Act of 1889, and if he refers to the Definition Clause of the Act of 1889 he will find that it covers manual as well as other technical instruction. At the same time as my hon. Friend assures the House that there is real doubt in the minds of members of County Councils — and nearly every County Council has appointed a committee to deal with the question of technical education, and as the clause is perfectly harmless, I will not oppose it.

MR. HOBHOUSE: A doubt has arisen in the country owing to the fact that in the Act of 1889 there are separate definitions of technical and manual instruction, whereas in the Act of last year there is only the expression "technical education," without any definition.

Clause read a second time and added.

MR. A. DYKE ACLAND (York, W.R., Rotherham): I have to move the following new clause at the end of Clause 1—

Appropriation of Moneys towards Technical Instruction.

"Where a Council shall have referred to a Committee the question of appropriating to purposes of technical instruction any sum consisting of the whole or any part of such moneys, this section shall, until the Committee shall have made their Report and the Council shall have arrived at a decision thereon, apply to such sum as if the same had been directed by the Council to be appropriated to such purposes."

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I am not quite sure the word section ought to be used in this way.

MR. A. ACLAND: The words follow on those carried the other night, and they have been approved by the President of the Local Government Board.

Mr. Hobhouse

Clause read a second time and added.

MR. HOBHOUSE: I also move that at the end of Clause 2 the following words be inserted:—

"And shall be construed as one with the Technical Instruction Act, 1889."

Amendment agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

PUBLIC BODIES (PROVISIONAL ORDERS) BILL.—(No. 233.)

Bill considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

RAILWAY SERVANTS (HOURS OF LABOUR) COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That Mr. John O'Connor be discharged from the Select Committee on Railway Servants (Hours of Labour).

Ordered, That Mr. Maguire be added to the Committee.—(*Colonel Nolan*).

ST. LEONARD PARISH, SHOREDITCH (SANITARY CONDITION.)

Address for—

"Copy of Report of D. Cubitt Nichols, esquire, and Edward Seaton, esquire, M.D., of the result of a public inquiry held by them, by direction of the Secretary of State for the Home Department, into the Sanitary Condition of certain premises in the parish of St. Leonard, Shoreditch."—(*Mr. Stuart Wortley.*)

POLICE ACT, 1890 (SUPERANNUATION SCALES.)

Address for—

"Return of Scales for Ordinary Pensions adopted under Section 3 of 'The Police Act, 1890,' by Police Authorities in England and Wales."—(*Mr. Stuart Wortley.*)

TEACHERS' REGISTRATION AND ORGANISATION BILL COMMITTEE.

Ordered, That Mr. Sydney Buxton be discharged from the Select Committee on Teachers' Registration and Organisation Bill.

Ordered, That Mr. James Ellis be added to the Committee.—(*Mr. Arnold Morley.*)

House adjourned at ten minutes before One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 13th March, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

SAINT MARGARET'S, LEICESTER, SELECT VESTRY BILL. [H.L.]

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, this is a Bill which is promoted by the Select Vestry of St. Margaret's, Leicester, with the view of obtaining the sanction of Parliament to the sale of certain land which is vested in them, and of providing for the application of the proceeds of sale for the benefit of the inhabitants, the parishioners of the Parish of St. Margaret's. The land in question was in the year 1764, or about that date, awarded to the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor of the Parish of St. Margaret's, and it consists of about 17½ acres. It has been for many years known as the "Parish Piece," and is held by the Churchwardens and Overseers for the time being "for the sole use, benefit, and advantage of themselves and the rest of the inhabitants of the parish, for the time being, who pay rates and taxes to the said parish." These 17½ acres which are thus held by the Churchwardens and Overseers for the benefit of the parishioners are situated in the Parish of St. Margaret's, and in the midst of what is now a portion of the town, containing a very large number of inhabitants. At the present time this piece of land is let to certain individuals at a rental of £130 a year, and they again let it out in allotments. The sum of £130 a year is certainly a very inadequate receipt from this valuable property, as your Lordships will understand when I tell you that it has been valued at a sum considerably exceeding £30,000. All that is received from it at present for the benefit of the inhabitants is the £130 a year which I have mentioned. That income has been divided between certain schools in the parish, but it has been found by the inhabitants of the parish, as well as the Churchwardens and Overseers, that it might now with advantage be sold, and applied to other purposes than those to which it is at present applied, and that the very considerable sum of money which would be received for it might be more advantageously used for the benefit of the parish than if the land were left in its present position—the parish being only in receipt from it of the income I have mentioned. Of one thing, my Lords, there can be no doubt, that this piece of land cannot be dealt with more advantageously to the parish by way of sale without the authority of Parliament. The matter was considered by the Charity Commissioners, and they came to the conclusion that it was not a case in which they would be enabled, under their general powers, to make a scheme which might be approved, involving the sale of this piece of land, without the authority of Parliament. The matter has been before the Attorney General, and he has come to the same conclusion, namely, that Parliamentary sanction would be necessary for the sale of the land. Therefore, so far there can be no dispute about that very important point. The Charity Commissioners have suggested that power should simply be given to sell the land by the Act which is being applied for; and that then it should be left to them to settle a scheme uncontrolled by Parliament in the way in which they can settle schemes in cases which come within their powers. On the other hand, the Attorney General has suggested that the better course would be to enable the Court of Chancery to frame a scheme in the way in which, in certain cases, schemes are framed by the Court now. The inhabitants of the parish, on the other hand, would prefer the destination of the proceeds of sale to be determined by Parliament; and they have proposed a scheme which is embodied in this Bill. Of course they are quite conscious that that scheme may be open to objections, and they do not desire to put forward in any way the scheme as one to be absolutely accepted as a necessary condition of the passing of the Bill. They wish, at all events, that there should be power given them to sell this piece of land, and to apply the proceeds advantageously for the benefit of the parishioners. Now, my Lords, the purposes to which the parish have proposed to apply the proceeds of the land I may describe shortly as a scheme for almshouses and out-pensions. The Charity Commissioners, on the other hand, have suggested a scheme which provides for a very considerable variety of objects. They have suggested that it should be applied in part for purposes of education; in part for purposes of a dispensary or infirmary; in part for a provident club; in part for a reading-room, library, and working men's club; and in part to providing allotments under the Allotments Extension Act; and they object to the scheme of the Vestry because, in their view, the establishing of almshouses on so large a scale as proposed is open to question. It does not strike me that the scale proposed is really very extensive; but I cannot help thinking that in matters which are properly within the rights of the Charity Commissioners, no doubt they would carry their views into effect in the framing of a scheme. But I do think there is a danger of too cast iron and rigid a system being imposed on different parts of the country according to the views of the Charity Commissioners. They object to almshouses; but some people may think, as the parishioners here do, that almshouses are a useful form of charity, that they serve important and valuable purposes, and that they would do so in this particular instance. I think that is at all events a matter which is well open to consideration, and which ought not to be subject to the absolute control and determination of the Charity Commissioners. But, of course, I quite admit that the view of the Charity Commissioners is a matter that ought to be taken into the most serious and careful consideration; and those who promote this Bill would certainly be very far from wishing that the Charity Commissioners should not put forward for consideration a scheme for the application of the money to be derived from the sale of this piece of land, or that that scheme, subject to their objections being also heard and considered, should not form a substantial basis for legislation in this matter. Of course that might be carried out by a scheme being prepared by the Charity Commissioners, and any objections of the parish to it being heard, and then, ultimately, the scheme determined upon being inserted in a Schedule to the Bill; so that before the Bill passes your Lordships' House, or Parliament, there should appear upon the face of it the manner in which the money is to be expended, and that the scheme should have Parliamentary sanction. It seems to me that would be obviously a full, acceptable, and satisfactory settlement of the matter. So far I have dealt with the suggested different schemes, and how those schemes are to be carried out; but I understand that my noble and learned Friend (Lord Hobhouse) opposes the Second Reading of this Bill altogether, at the instance of those who take the view that open spaces such as this should be kept as open spaces for the purpose of public recreation. Certainly I should be the last to deprecate in the slightest degree the importance of having sufficient places of recreation for the benefit of the inhabitants of populous towns; but in the present case the view taken by those who promote the Bill is this: that it is not really required; that is to say that within a few minutes' walk of this particular space there exists an excellent recreation ground which is open to the inhabitants of the parish, and which has been laid out for the very purpose. It is within this parish, and, as I have said, is within a few minutes of this very spot. Of course this is a consideration which must be borne in mind, that if you take a valuable piece of ground of this sort and devote it to purposes of recreation, the persons who more immediately benefit by it are those in the immediate neighbourhood, and it ceases to be as it was intended to be, a piece of land used for the benefit of the inhabitants at large; the more especially as here there exists a much better recreation ground than this would be within this very parish, and you would be taking from the parishioners at large that which belongs to them, and applying it for the benefit of a portion only of the people in that parish. That would be the effect of it, and therefore, it seems to me, there is a good deal to be said against the view that on such a ground as that the Bill should be thrown out on Second Reading. I think such a course as I suggest would prevent injustice being done to anybody; the views of all those who are interested would be reasonably and fairly considered, and those views which should be considered most desirable would be carried out. I cannot help thinking that the result would be to append to this Bill a scheme which would give general satisfaction and be greatly for the benefit of the parishioners of St. Margaret's. On those grounds I move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

*LORD HOBHOUSE: I am very sorry to oppose my noble and learned Friend, and very sorry to take up your Lordship's time, but it is my duty to oppose the Second Reading of this Bill. Before I address myself to the subject, I will hand in a Petition signed by 1,200 of the inhabitants, ratepayers of the parish, who are also 1,200 members of the governing body of this endowment. I will not trouble your Lordships by reading the Petition, but I will simply state that the upshot of it, as I gather from a copy which has been given to me, is this: that the petitioners desire that there should be no scheme at all made at the present moment, and that when a scheme is made it should not involve the sale of the land, but that the land should be kept as open land, and used as a recreation ground for the people of Leicester; and they deprecate the Legislature doing anything in the matter until there has been an ample local inquiry made by competent officials. I think when I have stated the case, your Lordships will see that that is a very reasonable Petition. I have said that I am sorry to take up time, but I think that at the present day it is hardly necessary to apologise for asking the Houses of Parliament to hesitate long before they give aid to proposals for the sale (for building purposes) of open land which is situate in the midst of a crowded population in a populous, growing town. I say in the midst, although this land is now nearly at one end of the town. It has, as I read in the Bill, itself been surrounded by buildings on all sides excepting a road frontage. Some 20 or 30 years ago the policy which is embodied in this Bill was considered to be the wisest policy, and it was common then to sell open lands in order to get more money for the purposes of the endowment. Your Lordships will bear in mind that this is a charitable endowment. But a remarkable change has come over the convictions and feelings of people in that matter. People have found that money may be purchased too dearly, that it may be purchased indeed at the expense of health and enjoyment; that health and enjoyment are better things; and that when you have got the money, even if it is wisely administered, which is not always the case, the enjoyment of it is confined to comparatively a few, while the health and the recreation are spread over the whole community. And so it has come about—at least I can speak for London—that this desire to keep open spaces, the love of fresh air, of the clear sky, of something to look over, of something to look at which is not bricks and mortar, has come to be a feeling spreading wide and deep among the poorer classes of the community. Now I am not one of those, although I appear at the wish of a Commons' Preservation Society, who oppose at all times and in all places the enclosure of open lands. I think that every case must rest upon its own circumstances. There may be, possibly, a case for doing what is proposed in this town of Leicester; but this I do say, with the anticipation that I shall meet with general assent, that those who come forward with such a proposal applied to lands in the middle of a populous town, ought to show strong and sufficient reasons for it, and that the mere money gain is not a strong and sufficient reason. You may read this Bill from beginning to end and you will find that no reason for this movement is alleged except that of money gain; and I propose to examine the Bill to show that the persons who promote it (who are the Select Vestry of Leicester) are not the governing body who represent this endowment; they do not tell us what the action of the governing body has been, and that they assign no reason why those who desire to oppose the Preamble of the Bill — that is to say, those who desire to contend that at the present moment no scheme should be made and that no sale of the land should take place, are not to have an inquiry in the locality; and why on the contrary they themselves are to have the inquiry transferred from Leicester to London, and to have it take place before a Committee of this House instead of taking place before the skilled Inspectors of the Charity Commissioners upon the spot, and at very little expense. The position of things is this: this land was given to the parish in lieu of common rights immemorially appertaining to the inhabitants of the parish. I call them inhabitants, but they are a qualified class. However, my noble and learned Friend and I, will not dispute about that; and it is convenient to call them inhabitants of the parish. The open lands were enclosed and the common rights therefore destroyed in the year 1764, and the 17½ acres were then allotted to the Churchwardens and Overseers; but the land was allotted to them upon trust for the use and benefit of the inhabitants of the parish. The administration of charity was not vested in the Churchwardens and Overseers, but it was vested in the inhabitants themselves. The land was—

> "To be let or otherwise disposed of, and the profits arising from it applied in such manner as the major part of the inhabitants aforesaid assembled in parish meetings to be held at the Parish Church on Easter Tuesday in every year should direct or appoint."

Now that may seem clumsy, it is not very common, neither is it unprecedented; but in point of fact, from that day to this the charity has been administered in that way. I so read in the Bill—

> "That ever since the date of the said award the land has been let, and the rents have been applied to various purposes, in accordance with the resolutions in that behalf passed annually at the Easter Tuesday meetings."

That being so, your Lordships would think that the Vestry, who are now the Trustees of the legal estate instead of the Churchwardens and Overseers, would have gone on to tell us in this Bill what the inhabitants wished; but, again, you may read the Bill from beginning to end, and you will find nothing of the kind; "the inhabitants" after this point are quietly dropped out, and we read of nothing but the views and the wishes of the Vestry. And now, as to the constitution of the Vestry, I must tell your Lordships something. They do not represent the ratepayers of the parish as a London Vestry does in a London parish; they have a very peculiar constitution, for the ratepayers elect 30 persons, I am told—I have not seen the Act, which is quoted in the Bill—and then they submit the 30 names to the Justices of the Peace, who select 20 persons from them; and those persons constitute the Select Vestry. Well, now, I say that the Vestry ought, at the very least, to have presented this matter to the inhabitants of the parish, so that they might have been able to deliberate and express their wishes upon it, I think it would not have been too much if they had propounded the matter at one Easter Tuesday meeting, or, at all events, at some meeting convened so as to be as good as an Easter Tuesday meeting, and then have left it to be pondered over and discussed during the year ensuing, and to be decided at the next Easter meeting. For, observe, my Lords, that it is impossible delay can be injurious in this matter. You may inflict great injury by a hasty determination to sell the land; but there can be no injury in delay, not even money loss, for everybody knows that the value of building land in populous and growing towns does not decrease, but increases, by a postponement of the period of sale. But what have the Vestry done? They convened a meeting, as I understand, last November. It is mentioned in the Petition that I have presented. At that meeting 129 persons attended—65 voted for the Bill and 64 against it. In fact, the resolution in favour of the Bill, which was presented in block to the meeting, was carried by the vote of the Chairman. Your Lordships now, I think, have it that this matter has never been submitted to those persons who are the governing body of this endowment in any regular way. When it was submitted irregularly the votes were equally divided; and now 1,200 of those persons come forward and protest respectfully against any interference by the Legislature until there has been such an inquiry as will thoroughly ascertain the wants, views, and interests of the parish in this matter. Therefore, I think the Bill stands on exceedingly weak grounds as regards the views and needs of the people of St. Margaret's. But I would ask: Why should the aid of Parliament be invoked at all at this stage? The reason assigned in the Bill is that the

Vestry has no power of selling the "Parish Piece," and accordingly their purposes cannot be effected without the authority of Parliament. Of course it is quite true that the Vestry cannot sell. They could not sell even if they were the Trustees of the Charity (which they are not), because no Charity Trustees can sell without the assent of the Charity Commissioners. By the assent of the Charity Commissioners they could sell; but I do not insist upon that because it is certain that the assent would not be given except in view of making a scheme, and when the Charity Commissioners came to make a scheme they would be hampered by the fact, by the accident, that these Trusts instead of being for purposes which are declared by private deed, are declared by Act of Parliament. Therefore, no satisfactory scheme could be made, because they could not interfere with this unwieldy governing body, and probably they could not mould the Trusts in the way in which an effective scheme would have to mould them. But they have, entirely unaffected by this Act, the power of inquiring and of making a report. They may hold an inquiry, as they constantly do under their ordinary statutory powers, for executing which they have a skilled and experienced staff of Inspectors; and such inquiries are held in the most efficient way on the spot where the people are who are interested in them, and almost without expense to the Charity, the whole expense of the skilled labour involved in the inquiry falling on the Charity Commission. There is no reason whatever why in this case such an inquiry should not be held, and the views of the Charity Commissioners, if they have any in the matter, embodied in a Report, which Report, of course, they would communicate to the tribunals that desire it. They may come to the conclusion—we believe they would come to the conclusion—that at the present moment it is not desirable that there should be a scheme at all; that it is better to let the property be employed for the present in the useful way in which it is being used—that is to say, let out in allotments to 147 of the working men of Leicester, and to wait until the growth of the town makes it desirable to have a recreation ground where there are now allotments. The noble and learned Lord said, as he is no doubt instructed, that there is at present ample recreation ground for the parishioners of this parish; but I am instructed to the contrary, and that although there is a park within a moderate walk of this particular locality, yet there are two considerations to be taken into account against that; one is that this park is kept as an ornamental ground and is no more a recreation ground for these inhabitants than the enclosed part of St. James's Park would be a recreation ground for the people of Wardour Street and Dean Street in Soho; and the other consideration is, that the town is rapidly growing round this land—this growing parish will have more inhabitants, and those inhabitants will year by year be more distant from the Abbey Park. But, after all, those are local matters; those are matters which would be threshed out by a preliminary inquiry before the Legislature takes any action at all. It has been common enough both for the Court of Chancery and for the Charity Commissioners proposal to inquire, though there is no jurisdiction to frame such a scheme as would be desirable for the purpose of doing what is proposed, and then to thresh out the matter, to indicate the headings of a scheme, and then let the parties go to Parliament with a private Bill to carry it into effect. That would be a reasonable course to take. Or another course would be to come with a Bill simply to untie the hands of the Charity Commissioners, and to provide that they might make a scheme in respect of this charity, though it is established by Act of Parliament, in the same way that they could make a scheme if it had been established by private deed. Either of those courses would be unobjectionable, but to transfer the onus of opposing the Preamble of this Bill to a Parliamentary Committee, who cannot direct a local inquiry, but must act upon such evidence as people can procure from Leicester, and bear the expense of procuring from Leicester—to thus transfer the matter without a very strong case being made for it is, in fact, oppressive, and is a proceeding to which I should hope your Lordships would not lend any countenance. I have omitted one matter that I ought to have mentioned, in connection with my statement that a complete change of policy has been adopted of late years with respect to these open lands. That change has found expression in an Act of the Legislature. It was found that under schemes formed no doubt upon the older views of policy, sales were being effected of what are commonly called fuel allotments, and field gardens and recreation grounds; and in the Commons Act of 1876 a provision was introduced forbidding such sales. It is there enacted that as to field gardens and recreation grounds, they shall not be meddled with by scheme at all, and as to fuel allotments they shall not be meddled with, excepting for the purpose of turning them into field gardens and recreation grounds. Now I do not mean to say that that enactment governs the present case; because in this case the land was not originally set out in allotments, it was to be for the benefit of the inhabitants simply; but I cannot help thinking that if the framers of the enactment I have just mentioned had been told that there was land in this position; that being originally given like the fuel allotments in lieu of rights of common for the benefit of the inhabitants of the parish, but which had in fact been used for a number of years—40 or more, as I learn from the Petition—for allotments for working men in the parish, and benefiting the parish in that way—I cannot help thinking that those who framed the enactment I have mentioned would have considered that lands in this position were equally worthy of protection. My Lords, I think I have now assigned my reasons why this Bill should not be read a second time. To recapitulate them very briefly, they are these:—Dwellers in populous towns have set their faces more and more against the taking of open lands within the ambit of those towns for the purpose of building. The Legislature has in a case that is strictly analogous forbidden that such open lands should be meddled with. The promoters of this Bill are not the managing body or the governing body of this charity They have not told us the views of the managing body. They have not taken any proper step to ascertain those views. So far as they have taken any step at all, the meeting held was equally divided; and here by this Petition 1,200 of them come to your Lordships to deprecate any further proceeding by the Legislature in this matter. Furthermore, the Vestry can get all they can reasonably ask at the present time by going to the Charity Commissioners and asking them to send down a skilled Inspector, who will hold an inquiry in the town of Leicester, and will thresh out all these matters in dispute between us, and ascertain as well as he can, not only what are the facts of the case, but what are the real views and interests of the people of Leicester. My Lords, I submit that these are reasons why you should pause before now reading a second time a Bill of this kind; and that if your Lordships can see your way to pause for six months it will not be one moment too long.

Amendment moved to leave out ("now") and add at the end of the Motion ("this day six months.")—(*The Lord Hobhouse.*)

*The Earl of MORLEY: My Lords, I shall detain the House but a very few minutes in commenting upon the speeches that have been made, more especially as it is not necessary for me at this present moment to discuss the merits of the scheme that is before the House as embodied in the Bill. I am in this somewhat singular position—that I agree entirely with the opinions expressed by my noble and learned Friend who moved the Second Reading of this Bill, and at the same time I agree, to a very large extent, with the opinions of the noble Lord who has moved the rejection of the Bill. With a great deal of his speech I entirely sympathise; but I cannot admit that the reasons he gave were sufficient reasons for rejecting the Bill at the present stage of its proceeding. The noble Lord seemed to me to have two distinct reasons for asking the House to reject the Bill at the present stage: one reason was the absolute one, that it is altogether undesirable to have any scheme at all, on the ground that open spaces should be allowed to remain wherever they exist at present, under present circumstances. If the House adopts that view I quite agree that the scheme ought to be rejected. But the noble Lord gave another reason which seemed to me to be a very reasonable one; he maintained that the House is not a fit tribunal to prepare a scheme for a charity of this description; and he added (in which I quite agree with him) that a local inquiry is very desirable. But the noble Lord did not refer to the suggestion made by the noble and learned Lord who moved the Second Reading of the Bill, namely, that there should be inserted in the Bill a provision that any scheme that is to be sanctioned by Parliament should in the first instance be assented to by the Charity Commissioners. That assent would obviously imply and involve a local inquiry, and not an inquiry here. It seems to me that is a very reasonable suggestion, and one that covers all the important points mentioned by the noble Lord who has just sat down; and I am all the more induced to ask the House to assent to this solution of the question because not longer ago than three years there was a case which was precisely on all-fours with that which is before the House on the present occasion. The case I refer to, and to which I desire to call your Lordships' attention, was that of a Bill dealing with St. Mary's Hospital, Newcastle-on-Tyne. In that Bill, before it was passed through the House, a clause was introduced into the Preamble to this effect—

> "That the Charity Commissioners have put forward a detailed scheme for the administration of the Hospital,"

and so on—

> "That the Commissioners have assented thereto, and it is expedient that the scheme so agreed to and set forth in the Schedule to this Act should be carried into effect."

In that way you would obtain all the advantage of having a scheme prepared by a skilled body accustomed to the preparation of schemes dealing with public charities; you would have that scheme scheduled to the Act, and thereby Parliament would reserve to itself that right of which I think it should not divest itself, of having the power and control over the scheme to be ultimately carried out. On these grounds I would ask your Lordships to assent to the Second Reading of the Bill on that distinct understanding; that is to say an undertaking to which, as I understand, the noble and learned Lord who moved the Second Reading was prepared to agree on the part of the promoters of the Bill—that the Charity Commissioners should be asked to prepare a scheme to be scheduled to the Bill. I would point out to the noble Lord who opposes, that if in that scheme, when prepared and scheduled, he finds anything to object to, he will have ample opportunity of presenting his objections when the Bill comes a third time before your Lordships' House.

*THE DUKE OF RUTLAND: My Lords, after the weighty opinion which has been expressed by the noble Lord the Chairman of Committes, I shall not take up the time of the House at any length; but I wish, being conversant with the circumstances in the town of Leicester, to say that a great deal of the speech of the noble Lord, who has moved the rejection of the Bill, must, I think, have been made in ignorance of the local circumstances in this case. Now, the Select Vestry here, although it is so called, does in reality represent fairly and completely the predominant opinion of that very large parish of St. Margaret's; and when the noble Lord says he is asked to present a Petition signed by 1,200 of the inhabitants, and founds himself upon that, I must remind him that 1,200 is only a very small proportion indeed of the 100,000 people who inhabit that parish.

*LORD HOBHOUSE: It is signed by 1,200 ratepayers. The 100,000 are not ratepayers.

*THE DUKE OF RUTLAND: Quite so; but I venture to say that your Lordship's House ought not to be asked to reject on Second Reading a Bill brought before it under these circumstances on the score that a small minority of 1,200 ratepayers have sent in a Petition against it. I venture to say that if Private Bills are to be treated in this fashion—if Private Bills, which do not find any great opposition in the localities from which they come, are not to be judged by a Private Bill Committee, you may as well abolish Private Bill legislation altogether. The fact is, my Lords, that the predominant opinion in the parish is in favour of the scheme. It is not for me to say whether the scheme is the wisest that could be prepared or not; but the House may fairly take it that the scheme represents really the opinion of the great body of the inhabitants; and after the full explanation which was given of it by the noble and learned

Lord who moved the Bill, I trust your Lordships will have no hesitation in giving it a Second Reading.

Lord HERSCHELL: I should like to say a few words with reference to what was stated by the noble Lord the Chairman of Committees and the noble Lord who moved the rejection of the Bill, to point out that I had intimated, in moving the Bill, I thought that it was a case in which it was desirable, and the propriety of which might very well be recognised, for the Charity Commissioners to look into the matter and prepare a scheme, although I gave reasons why I thought it was not desirable to regard their view as final, but to preserve the control of Parliament over the scheme. I am informed that there is nothing to prevent such a local inquiry as my noble Friend has spoken of being held by the Charity Commissioners, and their framing a scheme upon it in ample time for proceeding with the further stages of this Bill during the present Session. Obviously, under those circumstances, it would be extremely undesirable, when everybody admits that if anything is to be done by way of dealing with this land by sale, and your Lordships would not, I think, be willing to say that all the expense shall be entirely thrown away which has been incurred in introducing this Bill, when all that the noble Lord desires and requires can be arranged for and really completed during this Session, and the Bill then passed upon the Report, dealing with the matter according to the method which seems desirable after that Report appears. Parliament would in that way still keep its control over the matter after the local inquiry has been made, which will give the views and feelings of the inhabitants, as well as their suggestions in the preparation of the scheme.

On Question, whether ("now") shall stand part of the Motion, resolved in the affirmative; Bill read 2^a accordingly.

POLLEN FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 51.)

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without amendment; and re-committed to the Standing Committee.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.

Read 1^a: to be printed; and to be read 2^a on Monday next.—(*The Lord Thring.*)

The Duke of Rutland

THE EDUCATION CODE.

*Lord NORTON, in rising to call attention to the new Education Code, said: My Lords, I venture to draw attention to the draft of the new edition of the Education Code, which has been laid upon the Table of the House, and which after a certain number of days becomes law. I cannot help thinking that your Lordships will agree with me that the annual edition of the Education Code ought not to pass wholly unnoticed and wholly unexplained by the Representative in your Lordships' House of the Education Department. I confess myself that I think we are getting into a dangerous habit of conceding to Departments the power of by-legislation on important subjects. There is an absolute temptation to successive Ministers to make alterations in the Code in order to identify themselves with the new editions which they are bound to make year by year. We have had the Sandon Code; we had the Mundella Code; we have had a series of Codes made by various Ministers, whose names are honourably connected with them, but very much without the concert of those who have to administer the Codes, and whose difficulties in carrying out this most important matter of national education are increased by a perpetually altering Code of which they can know very little. I venture to say that very few of your Lordships have attempted to read the Code, and that of those who have done so still fewer will have understood it. The complications of endless improvements are worse, I think, than would be finality, which would be possible, if the Code were only more simple. Nobody can doubt the advance of national education in this country since the Act of 1870; but I think this multiplication of new directions from year to year, at all events, endangers it from a reaction, if not an unconscious departure from the original and fundamental principles on which the Education Act was passed. Now, this new edition (which I think is the 21st,—the system has come of age) was said to carry out no alteration, whereas there appears in the Appendix no less than eight pages of new articles. There was no alteration in 1888 pending the Royal Commission's Report. In 1889, a Code was brought forward but was dropped, because it was said not to carry out sufficiently the Report of that Commission, and further Minutes in Council were passed in consequence during that year. The Code of 1890, last years', embodied the improved Code with the Minutes which had been passed to further improve it. Now comes the draft Code which has been laid on the Table for this year, which, I think, needs at least to be considered both as to what it does, and, to my mind, much more for what it leaves undone. Now, first, as to what it does. Of all these eight pages of alterations not many need be considered. Some are very good. One, for instance, by the insertion of two or three words in the 13th clause—"and is upwards of 14," which even a student of the Code might pass over unobserved, it enables a clever child to pass the top standard before he is 14, and yet to go on until the age of 14, to use the phrase employed in the present system, "earning money for the school," whereas up to this time it has actually been to the interest of managers of schools to keep back clever children from passing the top standard, because they would no longer be profitable to them. Now, that is an obvious improvement and removal of a blot in the present system. There is a still clearer improvement in providing for a better classification of scholars by the schoolmasters being left entirely free to classify their scholars, and the Inspectors being bound to follow their classification in examinations. There is also an improvement in doing away with the distinction between teachers as trained and untrained. Instead of that distinction it is only stipulated that all must pass at least one year in a Training College. Then there are a great many improvements as to the grants and certificates of pupil teachers, and there are additions to the curriculum of study. A knowledge of the metric system is required. There is also an addition to specific subjects of mensuration and navigation. With regard to an alteration in reference to the subject of drawing, I rather demur to the new edition. The existing Code makes drawing imperative in all schools. I had yesterday a letter from the manager of a small rural school, in which there are only 40 children, stating that as the boys were going out early to the plough such easy and really necessary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic, which they could make use of, were to a great extent obliged to be given up for this requirement of drawing, of which they certainly could not make much use. But what I object to more is that this new Code makes it imperative that the drawings of these children shall be approved by the South Kensington Department. In the first place, it is creating a needless, if not mischievous, duality of Departmental action; but still more is it objectionable, as it seems to me the Inspectors are perfectly competent to examine and pass the ordinary performances of children in the elementary schools. If our great Inspectors, first-class men such as Matthew Arnold, are not able to pass judgment upon the drawings of little boys and girls in elementary schools, I really think we had better not have so high a class of Inspectors as we now have. I know what is aimed at in this change is a much higher kind of artistic drawing and design for the purposes of the manufacturers at the public expense. But I venture to say this is entering upon a new phase, of technical instruction, in our elementary instruction; and the new requirement of one class—subject at least to characterise a school as efficient, contemplates probably the elimination of the smallest rural schools from public aid altogether. I have only one more word to say as to the alterations in this Code, but it is upon an important matter—that is, the quiet omission of what I will call the experimental limit of numbers of day students at colleges, under this Code. In the existing Code of 1890, the day-training of teachers being a new thing, a limit of 200 students was proposed as sufficient for a first experiment. Now, I will ask, has there been time yet for experiment—can the experiment be considered to have been really made? I understand that the reason assigned for abolishing all limit is that some allowance is necessary to be made for waste, and that if you are to have 200 masters from day colleges you must have a certain additional number to make up the vacancies which will constantly occur as they pass out. Well, I maintain that if that is the case the number to represent that waste ought to be stated in the Code; and, at all events, some time for limited experiment is due to the misgivings of those private founders of residential colleges whose foundations, furnished at their own cost, have been accepted by the State. Those persons considered that the method and regular life and discipline of residence is the most essential part of the training of a schoolmaster; they considered it was essential for his own training and essential for giving him the power afterwards of training pupils in the schools, and especially for training their characters, which they consider the most important part of national education. The mere substitution of daily lectures is proposed; but I appeal to your Lordships whether it can be anything like an equivalent for a two years' residence in a training college, and whether it is not significant of the secular principle which we are unconsciously adopting in national education. To quote a sarcasm in General Booth's *Darkest England*, we are adopting a system which is fitted not to educate children, but to pass them through standards. It is obvious that the mere attendance at lectures cannot have the same effect in training a master to take charge of a national school as two years' residence in a residential college. But besides that, the proposal made by the Code, interpreted by accompanying circulars, will create a competition between the residential colleges and day colleges which is not equal. There are advantages afforded in the day colleges greater than in the residential colleges. The lecturers in day colleges may give the papers and assign passes to their own students. That might give them an enormous advantage over those in the residential colleges who are submitted for examination by Inspectors who come *ab extra*, and have nothing to do personally with the students they have to examine. But besides that, is it not also more attractive to avoid the discipline of a residential college and to live freely at home and only attend lectures at great institutions of University rank, opening to their ambition degrees, honours, and the higher professions, rather than the humbler national schoolmasterships for which the training is expressly given at the public expense? Is not such a system very likely to attract men to the higher ambition of entering the learned professions? Now, I will say no more about what this new Code does, but I should beg to be allowed to say a few words further about what it leaves undone, because I think that is far more important. The Code leaves uneradicated the condemned principle of piece-work payment for national education. I know the defence that may be taken from the Report of the Royal Commission, but I would beg your Lordships to form your own opinion and judgment upon that. It is, I venture to say, an absolutely condemned principle as a mode of payment for national education, and it is left incompletely repealed without any reason and with all the objections unremoved. Even the so-called "fixed grant" which was introduced by the last Code is not fixed at all, but there is a grant for infants which varies from 7s. a head to 9s.; there are the grants of 5s., 4s., 2s., and the chief grants of 12s. 6d. and 14s.; all being in inverse ratio to the need of the schools for aid—that is to say, the higher the position of the school the higher the aid, while the lower and humbler it is the smaller is the amount of aid to be obtained. All these gradations of pay vary according to the Reports of the Inspectors and depend upon the equipment of the schools, which, of course, in the case of poor rural schools can hardly compete with the rich Board schools. Some of these gradations are proportioned to the intelligence of the children, and the accident of their being town instead of country children will reward for what has nothing whatever to do with the efficiency of the master or the equipment of the school. Besides those instances of the variableness of the increased fixed grant, there are a great number of the old direct piece payments retained. Conceive discipline being priced at 1s. a head. Then there is 1s. for music; 1s. for class subjects, and 4s. for passes in specific subjects, in the same inverse ratio to needs, so that the higher the subject and the richer the class the more aid given. "To him that hath shall be given" is certainly the principle of these variable grants. There should be free scholarships for poor children rising to higher studies, which well-to-do parents should pay for. It is said that these points are not referred to, because this year is looked at as a year of reconstruction. It was talked of in that way by the Vice President of the Council in the discussion in the other House last year, and there is to a certain extent an expectation of important changes. The 17s. 6d. limit of grants has been long talked of, and the question of the exemption of schools from rating; but both those points have been postponed for some darkly-hinted legislation. A Bill is expected to be brought in this Session relating to what is called free or assisted education. But upon that hangs the whole character of the system, and of the Code. Upon it may depend a complete change of system. It is impossible, of course, to discuss a Bill which is not before us, and it is furthermore quite impossible to judge of what sails under two colours; but the drift must be to do away with the payment of fees in our national schools. Whether it is to be an absolute abolition of fees or only assistance in the direction of their total abolition, that must be the tendency of the legislation which is hinted at. Now, it is worth considering that, broadly speaking, anything like the abolition involves the absolute collapse of all the voluntary undertakings in connection with national education in the country. That it certainly must do, because voluntary schools, could not live without fees; the subscriptions they receive must be aided by fees, and larger fees are willingly paid for children in voluntary schools, simply because the people throughout the country prefer the kind of education which is given in those schools, an education which includes religious instruction. But a more important objection is, that it does away with the last vestige of parental responsibility for the cost of educating children, and adopts a complete public provision for private duty. Take two neighbouring ratepayers. One has, we will say, several children at the national school, and the other has none. If fees are abolished, both will equally contribute to the cost of national education, and there will not be a farthing more paid by the parent who is using the school for his children than is paid by the other who has no use of it. That strikes at the independent spirit of the country, and destroys all sense of parental responsibility, as far as the parent can afford it, for the care and education of his own children. Handing over the care of children to the State *in loco parentis* is a very serious proposal. It is not consonant either with the spirit or the habit of this country. A very significant illustration of our increased inclination to State schools was given last year, when a large sum of money was appropriated by Parliament, first for the redemption of beer licences, and afterwards, that proposal having been dropped, handed over to the County Councils without any specific appropriation being made by Parliament, but only a hint at technical instruction being left very much to the caprice of the County Council themselves. That was really a case of money being appropriated by Parliament for one purpose and transferred to some indefinite recommendation of education nobody knows exactly what. I defy anybody to say that such a proceeding has any precedent whatever in the history of Parliament. The London County Council have made up their minds to use it in relief of rates—that is to say, to conceal to a certain extent the enormous increase of their expenditure. Other County Councils have set manufacturers and agriculturists of every kind each proposing that the money should be spent in establishing a school of apprenticeship to his own particular trade. They have not ascertained whether this is to be an annual grant; but it is quite enough for them to know that this gift has come from the Treasury. They look upon it as having come from heaven, and they have made a hundred different plans to spend it, the supposition being that it would be employed for some purpose of advancing technical instruction in our schools throughout the country. I do not think your Lordships know, unless you have seen the Return which I moved for last year, and which was laid on the Table lately, of all the public money which is yearly spent for education in this country, the estimates for which are scattered in different Departments. It amounts altogether, including Industrial and Reformatory Schools, and others, much nearer £10,000,000 or £11,000,000 a year than the £3,000,000 which is so often quoted; and it seems to me that if Treasury largesses are to be thrown on the top of this large expenditure we shall very soon find that the cry which has already begun in London, and which is heard in all the large towns, will become much louder, and will lead to an absolute re-action against the system of national education altogether. I believe that we are being led into a general system of State direction of the entire education of this country. Under cover of a false name elementary education is being made to mean anything. All I say is, that if we have made up our minds to State education we had better do it openly and not under cover of a false name. But even if we are to have State direction of all the education in this country; there would still remain the question whether general taxation is to relieve all parents in the country from any special contribution to the education of their own children. I say, on the contrary, that it is essential to the spirit of independence in this country, and to the sense of public duty, that there should be no public aid afforded whatever, except that which is absolutely necessary in cases either of poverty or other parental inability to discharge the whole expense of their children's education. If that limitation were made, we should have some chance of escaping the reaction which I can foresee is coming against national education altogether on the present system. Remember what an outcry was made the other day when it was found that the London School Board rate had risen from 3d. to 11d. That caused a very indignant outcry; and I consider that if we are going on to deal with higher education in the schools, we must, in order to prevent a violent reaction against it, throw upon parents the responsibility of bearing the main expense of their children's education as far as they are able to do it. Clever children of the poorer classes should be provided for by free scholarships, when they are able to

make use of the higher education; or their fees might be remitted, but those parents who are able should pay fees covering the whole expense at least in higher schools. I consider that if State direction were thus allowed, although the payment being made by the parents, we should still have to check the Department from a licence of theory which is indulged in to such an extent. It is in that way that at this moment apprenticeship to trades is being included in elementary education. Children are indiscriminately kept at school and often prevented from obtaining a valuable part of the education of industry. There is, apparently, an absolute contempt for common industry, and every endeavour is made to keep labourers' children at school far beyond the age at which they ought to begin industry—for instance, to keep a sailor-boy from the sea in order to teach him at school to read Shakespeare. And now I understand under this Code there will be carried out much more extensively the keeping at evening book-studies poor children who have been hard at work all the day. If we could establish a reasonable mode of payment for education; if we could draw a line between elementary instruction and apprenticeship; if we could adapt our Educational Code to the requirements of various localities, and various classes of society, we should then have a system which would really be much simpler and more easy to carry out—probably a final Code, as all other countries have—not requiring to be perpetually changing, and we should have our schools adequately supplied with the money they require for efficiency, and not dependent on a precarious income earned by cramming children through a gridiron of standards. I therefore hope my noble Friend the Lord President of the Council will be so good as to meet the objections which I have ventured to raise both against the new provisions in this Code as to day colleges and as to the postponement of improvements which might have been introduced into it.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY: My Lords, there is one point only in the Code to which I should like to call attention. I will not say anything with regard to free education, though the noble Lord has rather invited us to enter upon that broad field. Nor can I share with him the gloomy view which he appears to take of the system of education pursued in our elementary schools. I must confess that I am not quite satisfied with all we have done. Still, I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that in our schools the last 20 years has been a period of magnificent progress; and I venture to say that the whole of the people whose children go to those schools, talking of them broadly, most cordially approve of the system of education as it now exists in them. We have had for the last 20 years attacks both upon the Code and upon its changes; but as far as I know it comes to this: that disapproval is always sure to be expressed by people who do not desire them; if the changes which we ourselves wish are introduced we throw up our hands; but if we find they are changes which our neighbours wish to make, we find ourselves taking a very gloomy view of the whole affair, and say that the Code is overladen with changes. The fact is, as long as the system of national education is as tentative as it is now, you must introduce for the quiet good working of the schools changes from year to year. I am hostile to large changes; but I think the Code this year hits the mark in showing that careful and anxious desire to facilitate the working of the changes which so largely characterised the Code of last year. I see nothing revolutionary in the changes in the present Code; on the contrary, I think they show a desire to help on the working of the schools, and I am very grateful to my noble Friend the Lord President of the Council, as head of the Education Department, for them. The one point, however, to which I should like to call attention is that of the day training colleges. I think we hardly realise to ourselves the enormous importance of the question of the training of our teachers; we do not sufficiently consider the magnitude of the interests with which we are dealing when we touch that question of the teachers' education. They are a perfect army now; I think there are at present some 60,000 men and women who are engaged in elementary teaching in the public schools in this country. I would venture to say that owing to the great increase in the Board schools, and also in many cases to the lack of attention on the part of managers, the whole formation of the character of children in many schools rests entirely on the teachers, and most nobly have the teachers responded to that charge. Both men and women have exercised the most careful supervision over the characters of the children under their charge, considering that supervision to be quite as important as the intellectual teaching they have to impart. Surely, then, anything which might affect or lower the character of this great army of teachers is a matter of the greatest national importance. And it affects not alone that great body of teachers, but the welfare of some 5,000,000 children attending the elementary schools in this country; so that the question is indeed a very large one. With regard to the day training colleges, I was one of the members of the Royal Commission on Education who earnestly recommended that a trial of those colleges should be made. It was clearly proved before the Commission that we wanted further means and assistance to ensure that all the teachers in our schools should in time be trained teachers, and it was shown that this was a subject of the gravest importance. But I would particularly ask your Lordships to remember that that Royal Commission laid very great stress upon the day training colleges being treated at first as an experiment. After the most careful investigation and cross-questioning of the best Inspectors, they came to the conclusion that the residential training colleges were absolutely the best for producing teachers, and therefore they wished the day training colleges to be treated purely as an experiment. That is to say, that the subjecting these teachers for a couple of years to the excellent home-training which those valuable institutions, the residential colleges, afforded was absolutely priceless in its effect upon the after lives of the teachers, and therefore as regarded their future influence with the children. And our best witnesses said, though they would like to see the experiment of day colleges tried, they hoped that care would be taken to prevent interference with the residential training colleges, as anything of that kind—if anything were done to impair their work—would be a great national loss. There are 43 of these residential training colleges at present, and they constitute a very important body of institutions. Half a million of money has been sunk upon buildings in connection with them, showing still very great devotion upon the part of their supporters. They are now largely supported by annual grants from the State, but the original setting up of those institutions was to a large extent the result of voluntary efforts. With regard to what the Royal Commission said, I think I ought to emphasise that, if I am not detaining your Lordships for a few minutes. They were unanimous in recommending the experiment of a scheme for the day training of teachers—that is, of day training colleges; but they wished that it should be tried on a limited scale, as they had strongly expressed their opinion that the existing system of residential training is best in itself. Then, again, they accentuated that in this way: they considered that it was advisable the experiment should be made of training students in non-residential lodgings, but that only a limited number of students, should at first be assisted for that purpose by the State. Then they went further, in pressing their point, by saying that Parliament would have to look at one matter with great caution; they said that the serious attention of Parliament, if this experiment was made, would have to be directed to the question of how they were to secure the religious and moral instruction of the teachers in the day training colleges. The Royal Commission, therefore, laid great stress upon the advisability of the experiment, but suggested that it should be treated purely as an experiment. The points in the new Code which have led me to make these remarks are these: Last year the experiment was announced, and the number of admissions to the day training colleges was to be limited to 200, but now that limit appears to have been taken away, and I do not think that the interval of the few months that have elapsed have afforded an adequate experience of how the day training colleges worked. I am not at all hostile to the experiment, be it understood, but I view with no little alarm the sudden sweeping away of the limit of number and leaving it quite open instead of its being a tentative measure. Then I would also point out that a great number of establishments are making application to be admitted to rank as day training colleges. I hear of such applications from Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Cardiff, Bangor, and there are altogether a considerable number of them. There seems to be very little security exacted for the religious and moral training of these future teachers of our children. I shall be glad to hear that that is not so, and that care is taken, not only with regard to moral, but religious training, and that in the mass of the schools in this country those responsible for them have decided that there shall be religious teaching given. Surely, then, if that is so, it is of the greatest importance that the teachers themselves should be qualified to impart religious teaching. Again, there is a third point with regard to this matter of the training colleges which a little alarms me. I cannot help thinking it has been unintentional on the part of my noble Friend the Lord President, but it seems to me that there is some inequality established already between the two classes of institutions; that is, between the day and the residential colleges. We do not want special favour shown to the residential training colleges, though by universal consent they are the best for the training of teachers; but I submit there should be no incidental advantage given to the day training colleges as against the residential institutions, otherwise there may be a rush to the day training colleges, because that is a much easier process for the teacher to go through than in the residential colleges. Now, I find that students in the day colleges are allowed a year to prepare for matriculation, whereas in residential colleges, under the regulations of the Education Department, they have little more than four months' preparation. I think in some way that must be due to a mistake, otherwise it would establish a serious inequality as against the residential establishments in favour of the day colleges. I have no doubt that could easily be remedied in the Department, but it is a matter which is seriously felt already by the heads of existing training colleges. Then there is another point: in one of the circulars of the Department it is stated that they will be prepared to accept the results of examinations held by the authorities of the University or College to which the day colleges are attached. The examinations of students in connection with the residential colleges are conducted by the highest skilled officers of the Education Department, who all act upon the same lines and have a given standard for the whole country, and who have nothing to do with those residential colleges. It cannot surely be intended that the Department should accept the examinations held by the colleges themselves; but it does seem, however, as if the examinations in the day training colleges may be connected by the authorities of those colleges themselves. It surely cannot be intended that the Government will accept the results of examinations so conducted as being on the same level of value, and I think the day colleges should not be exempt from the high standard of examination that the residential colleges are bound to submit to. I call attention to that point, because I see the Cardiff College is announcing that its examinations will be accepted by the Department instead of the examination by the Government officers. Independently of this point of view, I think that gradually these day training colleges might afford a sort of back-door to the profession which is exactly what the friends of education do not want. They are all trying to raise the standard of education, and of masters and mistresses; and to establish anything like a back-door to the profession through the day colleges, where the examination is not so strict and high, would be a real injury to the whole profession. That we know to be the case in the medical profession, and the same condition of things will creep in here if a very careful watch is not kept. I also notice there is an attempt made to secure the Government grant of £10, which students are encouraged to obtain as a sort of capitation grant. Those are the points to which I would venture to call the attention of my noble Friend the President of the Council, and I think all who are interested in the education and welfare of the children of the country may well beg the Department to keep very watchful care over the residential colleges as doing a work which is priceless for the State. We would ask them to take care that the religious and moral training of the teachers are secured, and that there should be no preferential advantages given to the day over the residential training colleges. I am perfectly sure those are the wishes of my noble Friend the head of the Department, and I hope your Lordships will excuse me for having gone into the subject in some detail.

*EARL FORTESCUE: I will not trouble your Lordships with more than a few observations, but I wish to support the appeal which has been made by my noble Relative to the head of the Department not to allow what was recommended by the Royal Commission to be tried only experimentally and tentatively to be established before the experiment can have been considered to have been anything like fully or fairly tried—not to remove all restriction upon it as I understand has been done, and to permit the indefinite extension in connection with the Department of these day training colleges. Surely it is very important if we are making an experiment that we should allow a sufficient lapse of time and continue the experiment long enough really to be able to form an adequate judgment upon its success or failure, and that we should not prematurely accept it as a proved success, and, as it were, compromise ourselves and commit ourselves to its extension. I quite agree with my noble Friend who opened the Debate, that it is very difficult to understand why the general school Inspectors, a distinguished and able body of men be it remarked, who are considered capable of judging of needlework, should not be thought capable, without the assistance of the Science and Art Department, of judging of the drawings done by the children in elementary schools. I should have renewed my protest against the adoption from a preceding Government of a mode of dealing with the school fees, which seems to me to be superseding the clauses of an Act of Parliament by something very like an evasion; only that the whole question of the payment of fees and of free or assisted education is so soon to be dealt with that it is hardly worth while bestowing any attention on words that are likely to be soon superseded. I will not be tempted into saying a word about the merits or demerits of free or assisted education. I have more than once expressed my views in regard to them, both *vivâ voce* and in writing, and I have seen no reason to change them. But I think we have quite enough to consider in the Code itself, and what lies within its four corners, without travelling into the consideration of a measure that is not yet before us. I cannot sit down without congratulating the country and Her Majesty's Government, and especially the noble Lord at the head of the Education Department, on the very great improvement which has been made in the direction of common sense and common fairness by the Code of 1890. The introduction of the principle that teachers are to classify the children in the different subjects in a manner that will most facilitate their instruction, and that Her Majesty's Inspectors are to respect such classification, seems so obviously consonant with common sense and common fairness that my only marvel is that the Department, which for many years was, I think, more characterised by great ability than by good practical common sense, should have maintained a different system for so long. What I have heard from teachers in elementary schools is that that improvement has been a very great relief to them, that it has greatly facilitated and benefitted the teaching in the schools; and I think the country, therefore, is very much indebted to the noble Lord for having courageously adopted such a very great improvement as he introduced in the Code of last year.

VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: My Lords, before the noble Lord answers the question put to him, I would, with great deference, venture to say a few words upon one matter affecting the Code with regard to a subject which has been wanting from the Code for a long time—that is, the subject of geography. I do not for a moment under-rate the subject of drawing, which is now one of the obligatory subjects in the elementary schools; I consider drawing is very useful indeed for general training; but I should like to point out that beyond the desire which we have of giving boys and girls the means of raising their condition in life we have another object to keep in view, which is the position which the children are to fill in future. I think the total omission of geography as a subject for boys for another subject for which they will probably have afterwards no great use is a matter which deserves the attention of Her Majesty's Government. Wherever I have been among the rural classes I have been struck with the total ignorance of boys as to the common elements of geography, a subject which they certainly ought to understand, or at least to have a general acquaintance with, if they are in future to discharge their duties as citizens in voting upon public matters. It seems to me absurd that you should call upon a man to give a vote upon the concerns of an Empire which extends all over the globe, when in giving it, he is not only positively ignorant of its outlying parts, of the position of the colonies and foreign countries with which we have to deal, but unacquainted even with the geography of his native country. I do think, therefore, that geography should, to a certain extent at least, be one of the obligatory subjects in the elementary schools of this country.

*THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK): My Lords, it is not at all unnatural, I think, that my noble Friend should call attention to the Code which interests so many throughout the country, and which may have such permanent effects upon the education of the people of the country; but I am not prepared to follow the noble Lord into those extraneous subjects which have nothing whatever to do with the Code, but which relate rather to the subject of higher education in various relations. They do not come at all under the general elementary subjects with which I have to deal, nor indeed are they before us at all; and if, as my noble Friend seems to think, they speedily will be before us, it is, I think, a pity he did not reserve his speech, and make it when he will have a better opportunity of dealing with the subject than by calling attention to particular portions of it of which he has just spoken. With regard to the last remark which fell from my noble Friend Lord Sidmouth, I may be allowed to say that I am quite as conscious as he is of the importance of geography being taught, but I am also conscious of the importance of not overloading the necessary subjects of the schools. Though the ordinary school books will, no doubt, give the scholars a great deal of geographical information, it is largely taught as one of the class subjects, and is one which is more taken up than any other, and I believe that an increasing knowledge of geography is being obtained throughout the country. I do not say that is the case in every school, some of the smaller schools may not go into the class subjects at all, but if they do geography is generally taught; and if the noble Lord will look at the Schedule he will see that geography is so far taught as to impart a knowledge of our own country and its dependencies. That is a part of the instruction of the children. With regard to the objections, or rather comments, made by the noble Lord who opened this discussion, he stated that it was wrong to say there were no alterations in the Code when there were eight pages of alterations; but he practically admitted, when he came to discuss them, that they were the finishing off of the Code of last year as regards a great many of them, having, in fact, been introduced by a supplemental addition, and they are now put in form as part of the entire Code, and though some may call it unintelligible, I venture to think it is more intelligible than any Code that has ever been published before. We have endeavoured to give as much assistance to the understanding it as we can, for the instructions to the Inspectors have been published at the same time as the Code; and, therefore, whoever chooses to read them may know the mind of the Government with regard to the duties of its Inspectors, and through them towards the population at large. Then, with regard to the points raised by my noble Friend, Lord Fortescue, and the noble Lord who spoke of classification and its great advantages. I find that has been much appreciated throughout the country, and it is very natural that it should be so, because it is much better that children should not be forced into a standard for which on all points they are not really qualified; but that the teachers should have the opportunity of classifying and bringing them into line with other children, so as to develope each in the subject in which he is proficient. Then, with regard to drawing, my noble Friend seems to be surprised that the examinations in that subject should be referred to the Science and Art Department. An attempt was made to bring it under what you may call the Educational Department proper, by Mr. Mundella, and what was the consequence? The consequence was, that the money having to be found by the Education Department instead of by the Science and Art Department, it came under the limit of 17s. 6d., and there was an increasing abandonment of the subject up to some 5,000 or 6,000 schools, and soon drawing would have ceased to be taught throughout the country. Well, now, we have brought it back into the same position as it was before; it is simply an illustration of the old adage that "Who pays the piper may call for the dances," and we have decided that the Department which pays shall examine into the drawings. My noble Friend seems to think that first-class men from Oxford and Cambridge—wranglers—ought to be the best examiners in drawing. I do not imagine they think so, and they are quite content that the scholars shall be examined in that subject by those who have studied at Kensington or in the Art Schools elsewhere, and who would be much better able to arrive at a conclusion whether the children had been properly taught than the Inspectors. With regard to needlework, we have now, in fact, Inspectresses of that branch of teaching, who are able to look much more carefully into the thing than has ever been done before. Then my noble Friend went into the question of fixed grants, upon which we had a discussion last year. I will not venture upon that discussion again, for a very good reason. The Code of 1890 has not yet been in operation quite six months, and, therefore, as to the effect of these fixed grants, whether they are going to have the bad effect which my noble Friend seems to anticipate or not, it is a little too soon to come to that conclusion; and we may, I think, keep the Code in the form in which it was last year, since we have had only six months' experience of its working. Then comes the question of the day-training colleges, upon which I am glad my noble Friend Lord Harrowby has also spoken, because I am most anxious that it should be understood that we quite feel this is a tentative process. The day colleges have hardly got into operation yet, and, perhaps, it may be interesting to the House to know what the state of things is at this moment. There are at present six colleges which are recognised as training schools for students to attend, namely, King's College, London; Owens College, Manchester; Mason's College, Birmingham; University College, Cardiff; Durham College of Science, Newcastle; and University College, Nottingham. The present number of students in these colleges is 170; so that we have not yet arrived at the number of 200 laid down in the Code of last year. It is quite obvious that if there had been the full number they would have increased automatically in the second year to 400. That had to be taken into account; otherwise the schools would have broken up, and they could not have been kept in working order, unless they had been kept supplied year by year. The consequence of the process now going on, as far as we can make out, is that there will be certain additions, probably next year, allowed to come in. At Cardiff there will be an addition of 20; at Newcastle 10; at Sheffield it is proposed to have 20; at Liverpool, to which my noble Friend alluded, but which is not yet open, it is expected there will be 30; and at Leeds, the Yorkshire College, 15. That would make 95 additional. So that one may reckon that, in two years from this time, the outside number reached will be about 530. Now, I want to call your Lordships' attention to this point. There will also be a great number of additional candidates for the Training Colleges. You will observe by the Code that the pupil teachers conclude their career by a Queen's Scholarship Examination; and if a teacher becomes a Queen's Scholar, he is entitled to admission to the training colleges. There will probably be a greater number of Queen's Scholars than there have ever been in that position before. My noble Friend seemed to be in dread that the pupils might leave their chosen sphere of teaching if they went to day colleges for training; but I confess I do not see the risk he speaks of. They have to make a statement when they go in that their object is to become teachers, and that they are not entering for any other purpose: they must sign a declaration that they intend *bonâ fide* to adopt and follow the profession of teacher. So that as far as we can bind them we do, having given them the opportunity at 16 of giving up the career of pupil teaching. At the end of the time they are in a position to be admitted to the training colleges. Therefore, there will be a great number of them coming on. I should imagine the number of students at present in the residential colleges is about 3,290, and there will be about the same for the current year. In the day training colleges, in 1891-2, there will be 435 students, and afterwards about 530, whose places will have to be supplied each year. Half of those places have to be supplied annually from the Queen's Scholars. Taking them at 4,824, 2,412 places must be yearly filled. For these there will be about 5,000 candidates available. Under the present pupil teacher system, the student has had an education for teaching as a pupil teacher; and, therefore, that to a certain extent obviates the objection which my noble Friend made as to the particular training in day colleges that they would not have obtained technical knowledge. Then with regard to the comment made by my noble Friend about matriculation; there has been a correspondence about that subject. The day scholars will have an advantage in that respect; but the students in residential colleges will have it as regards the certificate. Whether we can bring the two to a more equal position is a subject for consideration, and if we can manage to do it we shall. But really there has been a balance to a certain extent struck between the two, though the one gets the advantage at the beginning and the other at the end of the term. With regard to the question of moral training, my noble Friend will observe that the authorities of a day training college must have a local Committee, which will be held responsible for the moral discipline of the students, and, as a matter of fact, I believe it is ascertained that the normal teacher will undertake the moral training, and in that way we endeavour to secure it. I am afraid that in the residential colleges we cannot always secure it, because it is notorious that there have been occasions when there have been want of discipline and order in some of the residential colleges which were much to be deprecated, and which, I hope, will not occur in the day training colleges. I have now, I think, noticed all the points which have been raised. I am not aware that I have left unnoticed any question which has been put to me by any noble Lord; but I would rather, on some of those points, that the time had arrived at which we should have published our account of what has taken place so far during the past year. The Report is not yet upon your Lordships' Table for the year; when it is we shall be in a better position for dealing with facts and figures, and your Lordships will then be in possession, in the same way as ourselves, of the circumstances which have come before the Department. But I think I may say this upon the whole, that when your Lordships have heard the objections which have been made to-day, and have combined them with the eulogies which my noble Friends have been good enough to make upon the other parts of the Code, you may come, upon the whole, to the conclusion that, so far as can be ascertained, the elementary system of education is working well—working far more satisfactorily both as regards the pupils and the teachers; that it will, to a very great extent, remove the friction which existed in former times on account of the necessity of the individual examination of every child, and that it is more calculated to put them in a fitting position in the future. One other point is, that my noble Friend (Lord Norton) seemed to deprecate the evening continuation schools, the value of which has been proved by every educational authority in the country. It is admitted in these days that children who are taken too early from the elementary schools should be able to go back to their studies in the evenings, not after they have been working their brains all day at some employment which is a strain upon them, but after they have been working in the fields; and I can speak from personal knowledge that, in a great many instances, children go on in that way continuing their education in the evening schools with very excellent results. I think that it will be found to be one of the advantages of this Code that whereas there was formerly a great difficulty in children having to be sent for examination a considerable distance, the Education Department have now provided that the managers may have an examination themselves, and may send up the results where there are less than 20 children; so that we have done all we can to make it easy for children to be examined in these schools. I believe the result of this alteration will be that more children will go to these evening schools, and that great advantage will follow not in the extension of education, but in the direction of increasing the education which the children have acquired before, and more firmly fixing it in their minds. I have only now to say that I am much obliged to your Lordships for hearing me thus far upon this subject, and to add that I am quite ready to answer any further questions which may be addressed to me, except, of course, upon subjects which are still in embryo.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY: I would ask the noble Lord not to lose sight of the question of examining scholars in the day training colleges by Government Inspectors and not by their own local examiners. That, I think, is a point of considerable importance.

*VISCOUNT CRANBROOK: I quite recognise its importance; but my noble Friend will see how difficult it is for these schools to admit examiners of ours instead of having examinations by the professors belonging to their own colleges; but we should be in a position, having the papers sent to us (though we should not be able to alter the procedure which they follow in their own colleges), to re-assess them afterwards as regards the students in the different colleges throughout the country, and to say what position they ought to take as teachers.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY: I am glad the noble Lord agrees that it is a very important point.

REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS ACTS AMENDMENTS BILL.—(No. 53.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD BASING: In asking your Lordships to read this Bill a second time I need only state in one word that its object is to clear up doubts which have arisen as to the source from which the registration expenses should be defrayed in the case of parishes which are within

Parliamentary boroughs, but outside municipal boroughs. This Bill provides that those expenses shall be paid, half out of the poor rate and half out of the county fund, which is analogous to the existing law as regards other places throughout the Kingdom.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Tuesday next.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) ACT, 1890, AMENDMENT BILL.

(No. 58.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*THE DUKE OF RUTLAND: My Lords, in the much to be regretted absence of the Lord Privy Seal, I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill, which has come up to your Lordships from the House of Commons. Its object is extremely simple. Your Lordships are probably aware, from some interesting statements which have been made in another place, that the Seed Potato Act has worked well, and has been largely made use of; but in a few instances its operation has been found defective, owing to the provisions in that Bill, with regard to those who have the misfortune to cultivate land in conacre, and those who are day labourers. Those agriculturists and those day labourers in the West of Ireland appear to be excepted from the benefit of the Act, and this Bill, therefore, proposes to repeal the limiting 5th section of that Act, and to enable in future the Poor Law Guardians of the different Unions in the West of Ireland to sell to the cultivators in conacre and day labourers the seed which they stand so much in need of.

LORD DENMAN thought that it would be extremely useful if some provision were made for the purchase of oats in addition to potatoes.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House on Monday next.

House adjourned at half past Six o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 13th March, 1891.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

METROPOLIS (SHELTON STREET, ST. GILES) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

(by Order.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*(3.10.) MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE (Finsbury, Holborn): I beg to move "That the Bill be read a second time this day six months." The Bill is a Provisional Order Bill, and it seeks to modify to a serious and mischievous extent a scheme for the improvement of an unhealthy area in the district of St. Giles made under the Artisans' Dwellings Act and confirmed by an Act of Parliament in 1887. The London County Council are now the body charged with carrying out this improvement scheme; but they have done nothing since they have been in existence to carry it out, and they now come here to ask the House to relieve them of their obligations. The scheme of 1887 to which I refer was not a heroic scheme; it did nothing more than was absolutely necessary for the health of a particular area, and I trust that the House will insist upon the scheme being carried out. When I remind the House that a very large number of the working people of London find employment in St. Giles, and are compelled to reside near their employment, hon. Members will see that anything that affects the sanitary requirements of the district is not unworthy of the serious attention of the House. I oppose this Bill because I believe that, if passed, it will aggravate and perpetuate some of the worst evils of an unhealthy district, will operate with grievous injustice to the working classes of St. Giles, and will sanction an instance of trafficking in land on the part of a Public Body, which, if it were allowed to become general, would give

rise to grave public inconvenience. In 1883 representation was made by the medical officer connected with the district respecting the area now known as the Shelton Street area. The representation stated that disease had become prevalent in the locality, which was reasonably to be attributed to the closeness, narrowness, and bad arrangements of the streets and houses. At that time the Metropolitan Board of Works was the body entrusted with the carrying out of schemes under the Artisan's Dwellings Act. But the Board refused to take any action upon the representation made by the medical officer of St. Giles District Board. Having refused to take action, they were obliged to send their reasons to the Home Office, and the Secretary of State ordered inquiry. An inquiry was accordingly held by Mr. Cubitt Nicolls, at which the parties were heard and witnesses were examined. Mr. Cubitt Nicolls came to the conclusion that the St. Giles Local Board were right in requiring that the area should be dealt with under Cross's Act. Thereupon the Metropolitan Board were directed to proceed under Cross's Act. Proceedings were then commenced *de novo*; a fresh representation was made by the medical officer of St. Giles; and in November, 1886, a scheme was prepared and sent to the Home Office. The Home Office on receiving the scheme thought it right to hold another public inquiry in order to consider the details of the scheme. Mr. Cubitt Nicolls thereupon held a second public inquiry, at which the proposed scheme was carefully investigated, with the result that Mr. Cubitt Nicolls reported in favour of the scheme, and the Home Office proceeded to frame a Provisional Order for the carrying out of the scheme, which Provisional Order was confirmed by Act of Parliament which received the Royal Assent on the 12th of July, 1887. I have been careful to detail the slow and laborious steps by which the scheme was put forward, considered, matured, and finally adopted. There was no haste. The proceedings began in 1883, and did not receive the sanction of Parliament till 1887. There was nothing done in secret; there were two public inquiries, and the case was carried out at the instance of the St. Giles District Board of Works—the Local Authority — familiar with the locality, knowing all about the wants of the district, and whose medical officers were in constant contact with the unfortunate people who suffered from the insanitary condition of the neighbourhood. My opinion now is that that scheme ought to be carried out. The area in question is the area east of Drury Lane, and in the middle of it runs a narrow street known as Shelton Street. The main feature of the scheme was simply to widen Shelton Street so that light and air might be let in. When at last Parliament approved the scheme, the St. Giles Local Board thought that at least it might be carried out. They had for years waged a contest with the Metropolitan Board of Works, and at last having vanquished the Metropolitan Board they found that they had to encounter a new foe in the London County Council. The County Council now ask Parliament to reverse its decision in 1887, they ask to be relieved from the obligation of widening Shelton Street, and they actually ask to be allowed to put bricks and mortar upon the area of Shelton Street, and thus render the district close and unwholesome as it is now, still more close and unwholesome. One small detail of the new proposals of the County Council illustrate in a striking way the antipathy with which the County Council appear to regard the admission of light and air. The stopping up of the greater part of Shelton Street renders it necessary for the purposes of traffic to make between Shelton Street and Parker Street an opening 30 yards long and 20 feet wide. They dignify this miserable passage by the name of a new street. According to the provisions of the Metropolitan Building Act no new street is allowed to be made of a less width than 40 feet, because no street can be healthy that is of less width. But the London County Council, having a dispensing power are privileged to exercise the patent and peculiar privilege allowed to no one else of creating a new slum. Another part of the case relates to the re-housing of the working classes. 1,208 persons have been displaced; and in the scheme of 1887 provision was made for the re-housing of 660 persons of the working class. The County Council now propose not to re-house 660 persons, but 608 only, and of these 608 persons but a very small portion are to be of the working class. The 1,208 persons displaced were divided into two classes; 861 belonged to the working class, and 347 did not belong to the working class, but belonged to that wandering casual class who find their refuge in the common lodging-house. Now, while the County Council have taken under their special protection the bulk of the 347 persons of the common lodging-house class, they treat with very scanty consideration indeed the 861 persons of the working class. They propose to bring together in one vast barrack of a building some 320 persons of the common lodging-house class for their mutual edification and improvement. Now, who are those who frequent the common lodging house? Mr. Cubitt Nicolls says that the occupants of the common lodging houses in this district consisted of board carriers, a few costermongers, and porters; but that the majority were cadgers, beggars, and thieves; and he adds that of the females nine out of ten were prostitutes. I should be sorry to think that the cadger, the thief, and the prostitute are beyond the reach of human sympathy, but I am not prepared to endow the County Council with the power to carry on a great missionary enterprise at the expense of the pockets of the ratepayers. I would say to the County Council—

> "This faith has many a nobler priest
> And many an abler voice than thou."

This is an artisans' dwellings scheme. The land has been obtained for the purpose of providing houses for the working class; and it is unreasonable to make provision for 320 persons in a common lodging house, while you only provide for the re-housing of less than 300 of the working class. The scheme of the County Council, if eventually carried out, will permanently displace 573 of the working class, whilst it will provide for collecting together at the public expense nearly the whole of the cadgers, beggars, and thieves, who formerly found refuge in this district. But the County Council have laid out their new scheme so badly that a considerable portion of the land purchased under the scheme of 1887 cannot, they say, be utilised, and they seek leave to sell about 28 per cent. of the land available for artisans' dwellings. Now, I regard it as a most dangerous thing when land is purchased for the purpose of erecting artisans' dwellings to allow the County Council to realise a profit by selling it. I therefore trust that the House will insist upon the London County Council carrying out the scheme of 1887. There is one other matter I should like to mention. Hon. Members will notice that on the back of the Bill are the names of the Home Secretary and the Under Secretary for the Home Department. I have no wish to appear to be in any way hostile to that Department; but it seems to me that the Home Office, in adopting the scheme, have acted in a purely Ministerial capacity. I can understand how difficult it is for the Home Secretary to attempt to stem the great torrent of the benevolence of the London County Council. If he had refused his formal sanction to the scheme he would have given a final decision, which might have been the occasion of a considerable amount of friction, and the County Council would have said, "You have prevented us from obtaining the decision of Parliament." I would ask the House to consider the cost to which the Local Board of St. Giles have already been put. They have expended hundreds, if not thousands, of pounds in local inquiries, and why are we to compel them to incur further expense? I hope the House will reject the Bill, and I beg to move that it be read a second time on this day six months.

SIR J. SWINBURNE (Stafford, Lichfield): I beg to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*Mr. Gainsford Bruce.*)

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question"

*(3.35.) EARL COMPTON (York, W.R., Barnsley): I think that if the House only heard the speech of the hon. Member who has just sat down hon. Members might arrive at a unanimous decision that the Second Reading of the Bill ought not to be passed. But there is another side to the question which has not been placed before the House, and I

ask for attention while I bring it forward. The hon. Member alluded to the action of the Home Secretary, but I do not think the Home Office will be prepared to say that they have passed lightly over the matter. On the contrary, they have sanctioned the scheme of the London County Council, because they believe it to be a good scheme. And there are certain omissions in the speech of the hon. Member. First of all, the scheme is not the scheme of the County Council, but of the Metropolitan Board of Works. We inherited it, and it has been a most inconvenient legacy. The space of ground affected by the scheme, called the Shelton Street area, is an oblong with a narrow street at the north, a narrow street intersecting it, and other narrow streets on the south, east, and west. It was originally covered with a variety of buildings—a hall called the Middlesex Music Hall, a carriage factory, various workshops, public houses, and a skittle alley, besides a large number of insanitary houses. The insanitary property was alone scheduled under Cross's Act in consequence of its insanitary condition, and the County Council have now inherited this oblong piece of land, covered with the above-mentioned premises, and only partially cleared. Shelton Street—a street about 18 feet wide—intersects the whole of this oblong, and the chief difficulty of the London County Council, against whom the Motion of the hon. Member is directed, has been the re-housing of the people whom the scheme will displace. No provision was made for them when they were removed from the area, and no provision has been made for them since. There were, in fact, 1,208 persons belonging to the working classes to be removed from the area with absolutely no provision having been made for them in any shape. Their displacement took place five years ago, and nothing has been done for them since. The Metropolitan Board of Works, under the Provisional Order of 1886-7, reduced their obligation in reference to re-housing to 660. That was what we found when we came to deal with the question; the area was covered with a number of buildings, and there was a necessity for re-housing 660 persons. We have done our best to meet the difficulty, but the question is whether it is possible to carry out the whole of the scheme of the Metropolitan Board, and re-house 660 persons. The London County Council, acting on the advice of their officials, have come to the conclusion that it would be absolutely impossible to re-house 660 of the working classes within this area, and that the only way in which it could be accomplished would be by erecting a very high building, which would be contrary to the County Council's regulations. We intend to carry out re-housing as far as we can. But under the present scheme we shall not erect a building for the working classes more than three storeys in height. By doing this we shall be able to re-house 608, which is really four above the limit required by the Home Secretary, namely, provision for the re-housing of one-half of the persons displaced. If we had carried out the wishes of the hon. Member and provided a wider new street we should have been prevented from finding accommodation for as many as 600 persons. The details of the scheme are complicated, and in my opinion are much more fitted for the consideration of a Committee than for this House. We propose to take a strip of land between Shelton Street and Parker Street for the purpose of erecting artizans' dwellings with a new street 20 feet wide, which is two feet wider than Parker Street at the present moment.

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: Was the matter gone into by Mr. Cubitt Nicolls?

*EARL COMPTON: I believe not; but it has been gone into by others, who are satisfied.

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: What evidence was given, and by whom, that Mr. Cubitt Nicolls' original plan was impossible?

*EARL COMPTON: That is a question which will have to be threshed out in the House of Commons. The scheme has received the sanction of the County Council, and I presume of the Home Secretary also. Another objection urged by the hon. Member is that if we do away with Shelton Street and close it we shall cover the whole of the area with buildings and increase its insanitary state. Now the chief object of the County Council is to leave a large air space in connection with any buildings they undertake to provide. If there is any question as to the want of air space the County Council will at once give way. As regards the new street, it is 20 feet wide, and as there are two exits from the music hall which we cannot close, we are obliged to make a new street. We do not wish to leave a *cul de sac*, and therefore we propose to make a small street which is to be 60 feet long. There will not be a single window looking into it; it will be 20 feet wide, and the buildings on each side will be 30 feet high. It is to be made absolutely for no other purpose than to help the exits from the Middlesex Music Hall. The hon. Member says the Local Management Act requires that no new street shall be made that is not 40 feet wide; but we have a discretionary power, and as the street is not to be used as a means of entry into houses, I do not think the House would be wise to reject the scheme on that account. If we were to make the new street 40 feet wide the result would be to diminish the accommodation we propose to provide for the working classes who are displaced. That would be to defeat the object of the hon. Member, who desires to make provision for as many of the working classes as is possible. I gather from the Petition of the District Board that they ask us to acquire the whole or a very large portion of the site. If that had been done originally a great deal of trouble would have been saved. There is in the middle of it a carriage factory belonging to Mr. Corben.

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: Has any offer ever been made to Mr. Corben?

*EARL COMPTON: We have approached that gentleman, but have failed to come to any arrangement, because his terms are too high.

*MR. GAINSFORD BRUCE: What did the County Council offer?

*EARL COMPTON: I have only stated the absolute and literal truth. We have attempted to negotiate with Mr. Corben, but his terms are so high that we have failed; and this very Mr. Corben is a member of the District Board of Works, now petitioning Parliament to require us compulsorily to acquire his property. Some objection has been raised to the London County Council erecting a lodging house, but an Act of Parliament was passed many years ago by Lord Shaftesbury to provide that lodging houses should be built in London. In Glasgow the municipality has built a

lodging house, and has made it a thorough-going commercial concern, bringing in a good profit. In my opinion, you could not benefit London more than by allowing the municipality to build respectable lodging houses. By so doing we should set a good example, which, I think, is sadly needed. Twelve registered lodging houses have been swept away from this area, in which were housed something like 350 persons. We propose to erect a lodging house which will re-house something like 320 persons. If we were to adopt the scheme of the hon. Member we should only be able to find lodging house accommodation for 150 persons. We think that the scheme is the best we can carry out in the interests of the working classes. I hope the discussion which is taking place will do some good in bringing prominently to the front a point which is too often overlooked, namely, that schemes are constantly passed by which a large number of the working classes are cleared off without any provision having been made beforehand for re-housing them. In this instance, five years after 1,200 persons have been swept off, we have a discussion raised as to whether we should re-house 660 or 604. I hope the House will assent to the Second Reading of the Bill.

*(4.0.) SIR JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I have carefully examined the site which is proposed to be dealt with by the Bill, and I confess that I see considerable objections both to the old scheme and to the new one. I have even gone further; and as it is quite impossible for the House to enter fully into the question, I have fortified myself with the opinion of a skilled person. There was a good deal to be said in favour of the original scheme, and a good deal also against it. So also there is a good deal to be said against the County Council's scheme, and a good deal for it. But all these are matters which had better be discussed by a Committee upstairs, seeing that they are technical and professional, and that they require a large amount of local knowledge. I think that my hon. Friend opposite has done good service in calling attention to the manner in which these schemes are promoted. This scheme was originally promoted in 1883, and it has only been

brought to a nominal conclusion in 1891. The unfortunate people who dwelt there were cleared out before any definite plan was ready for adoption. I trust that in future such schemes may be carefully prepared beforehand, and that after they have been submitted to the Home Office, they will be carried to a conclusion within a reasonable time, which has certainly not been the case in this instance. I would advise the hon. Member for Holborn (Mr. Gainsford Bruce) not to press his Motion.

*(4.5.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): I have a good deal of sympathy with my hon. Friend who has moved the rejection of the Bill, and in nothing I have to say shall I find fault with the natural and proper solicitude he has displayed for the particular district in which it is proposed to carry out this scheme. But we have to consider what the circumstances are. In the first place, it is not a very large scheme; secondly, it is a very old scheme; and, thirdly, it was never a very good scheme. As my hon. Friend (Mr. Gainsford Bruce) has referred to the action of the advisers of the Home Office, it is only right that I should say that those advisers, in reporting upon the scheme, have expressed regret that the original plan was not a wider one, because in that event it would have included a larger area of insanitary property. We have now to consider whether at the present day, many years after the original scheme was propounded, the plan now submitted is the best way of dealing with this particular area. My hon. Friend is right in saying that, in regard to a certain class of cases where the accommodation for re-housing the working classes is proposed to be reduced below a certain limit, the authority of the Secretary of State is absolute, and he has power to make modifications, even in a scheme which may have received the approval of Parliament. At the same time, there are other such cases, such as the present case, which cannot be finally decided by the Secretary of State, but which have, according to the apparent intentions of the Legislature, to be considered by a Select Committee. The Secretary of State being applied to by a great representative body like the London County Council did not think it behoved him to step in at a preliminary stage of the proceedings and entirely close the door to the consideration by such a Committee of a scheme which, at all events, is intended *bonâ fide* to do the best that can be done to settle a difficult question which they have inherited. The words "common lodging house" have been used, but such houses, and the lodging house which the London County Council now propose to erect, signify two totally different things. My hon. Friend in his description of a lodging house has proceeded on the assumption that the persons by which it is inhabited are always of the same class. It is, therefore, necessary I should remind the House that in the application which the London County Council are making here to-day they are seeking to exercise powers which were conferred on their predecessors 40 years ago in Lord Shaftesbury's Act, and confirmed in the Consolidation Act of last year; and if the present scheme is adopted, they do not propose to build a "common lodging house" in the ordinary acceptation of that term. The class of building which the County Council is empowered to erect is described in the Housing of the Working Classes Act of 1890 as "lodging houses for the working classes," who are totally distinct from the kind of population who are driven by necessity to metropolitan common lodging houses under the Common Lodging Houses Acts of 1851 and 1853. The latter class of houses could not be erected by the Local Authority. They are the outcome of the speculation of private individuals, and, in view of the class of persons they accommodate, Parliament has placed them under the control of the Commissioner of Police. Thus the House will see that between the two classes of lodging houses there exists the widest possible distinction. The area which the County Council now seeks to deal with is a peculiar one. It is only an acre and a half in extent. The portion traversed by the length of Shelton Street which it is proposed to close is in no part more than 70 yards wide, and in one place as little as 50 yards; and I would suggest, with all respect to the House, that the detailed questions as to how the land

should be built on and laid out will be best decided by a Committee—whether there should be a new street 20 feet wide; whether it should be bounded on each side by houses three storeys high or five storeys high; whether Mr. Corben's premises should be acquired, and whether provision possibly can be made for re-housing more than one-half of the persons displaced. This is the only instance in which the London County Council or any other Public Body has sought to give effect to the powers conferred by the Shaftesbury Act of 40 years ago, and I hope the House will pause before rejecting a scheme which promises to have such beneficial results.

*(4.12.) LORD H. BRUCE (Wilts, Chippenham) complained that the County Council had not carried out the original scheme of re-housing 660 of the displaced persons.

*EARL COMPTON: Perhaps I may be allowed to remind the noble Lord that the original scheme was prepared by the Metropolitan Board of Works, and not by the London County Council.

*LORD H. BRUCE: My argument is that upwards of 1,200 of the working classes have been cleared off or evicted. Originally it was proposed to re-house 660 of them, and now the scheme has been so whittled down that accommodation is only proposed for 608.

*(4.15.) MR. THEOBALD (Essex, Romford): The London County Council, having become possessed of this property, appear to be animated by the desire which generally animates other owners of property, namely, to make as much out of it as they can. They are not going, as they compel others to do, to widen the roadway. I think they ought to be required to observe themselves the same rule which they lay down for others. I shall certainly vote for the Amendment.

Question put, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

(4.16.) The House divided:—Ayes 168; Noes 84.—(Div. List, No. 86.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

Mr. Stuart Wortley

QUESTIONS.

BRITISH HONDURAS.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is aware that considerable friction exists, and has existed for the past six months, between the unofficial members of the Legislative Council of British Honduras and the Governor of that Colony on a question of taxation; that these unofficial members have resigned their seats in a body, and that the Governor is unable to procure any colonist of standing to fill these vacancies; whether the demand of the colonists for representative government has been embodied in a Petition to the Colonial Office; and whether the Government intend to take action in the matter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The first part of the question correctly describes the condition of political affairs in the colony; but as to the concluding words, I may observe that although it is true that the gentlemen to whom the Governor applied have declined to act, it may be hoped that the new Governor may be able to fill up the places. A Petition for a change in the constitution, giving unofficial members a majority in the Legislature, has been received. Her Majesty's Government have replied that in a colony on the mainland of America, having relation with neighbouring foreign States for which the Crown is responsible, and containing only about 400 inhabitants of European descent out of a total population of 30,000, it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to surrender its control over legislation and finance.

CROWN AGENTS FOR THE COLONIES.

SIR T. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state what are the relations between the Colonial Office and the Crown Agents for the Colonies; whether the control exercised by the Colonial Office over the Colonial Agents comprehends any division of the profits of the agencies; if so, to what amount, and under what head is it credited to the Imperial Revenue; what are the annual profits of these agencies, and what is the annual amount of their business; and whether he is aware that the West Indian Colonies, including British Honduras and British Guiana, have recently passed Resolutions through their Legislatures condemning the agency system as an expensive and wasteful medium for the transaction of their business; and, if so, upon what grounds have these resolutions been overridden by the Colonial Office?

Baron H. de WORMS: The hon. Baronet will find full information in the Parliamentary Paper C 3075 of 1881, and there has been no change since then in the relations of the Colonial Office with the Crown Agents, who are appointed on fixed salaries. These officers derive no personal profit from the transactions of their office beyond their remuneration as fixed by the Secretary of State. No charge is incurred by Imperial Revenues in connection with the Crown Agents Office, and no receipts accrue to those Revenues. The Secretary of State is satisfied that economy and efficiency are secured in a notable degree by the employment of the Crown Agents.

LORD COURTOWN'S PIER.

Dr. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if it is a fact that the sum of £1,000 was advanced by the Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland to the Earl of Courtown for the purpose of repairing his pier; and whether any interest is paid thereon?

*A LORD of the TREASURY (Sir H. Maxwell, Wigton): Yes, Sir; £1,000 has been advanced to the Earl of Courtown for the purpose of repairing the pier, and interest is paid thereon by his Lordship.

COUNTY ELECTORS ACT.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board, having regard to the fact that under existing statutes it is required in all counties and boroughs that all printed lists of persons entitled to vote, claiming to vote, and whose names are objected to, shall be published at latest on 25th August of each year, whether it would be possible to allow the declarations of amendment under Section 6, Sub-section 1, of the County Electors Act, to be made at any time before the sitting of the Revision Court; to alter the date of commencing the work of revision from 8th September to 1st September; to require the Revising Baristers to sit *de die in diem*, and to complete the revision by 30th September, if necessary increasing the number; and thus give ample time to the authorities to print the Register of Electors both for Parliamentary and municipal purposes, and obviate the necessity of altering the existing dates of qualification for the franchise?

*The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): If the revision of the lists commenced on the 1st September, as suggested, and the lists of claimants and persons objected to were not published until the 25th August, sufficient time would not be allowed for persons to see the claims and objections and make the declarations. The result might be that many persons objected to might lose their votes; because, in practice, the objections are not sent until the last moment. It would not, I think, be right to allow the declarations to be made at any time before the sittings of the Court, as there would be no sufficient opportunity of inspecting them.

*Mr. LAWSON: May I ask how the right hon. Gentleman proposes to meet the confusion that it is said will arise in certain counties in view of the Bill having been withdrawn?

*Mr. RITCHIE: The Government are considering the question, and I hope in a few days to be able to inform the House of the result of their investigations.

EDINBURGH SHERIFF COURT AND THE PUBLIC.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the fact that on the 26th January, at the trial of Robert Smith, Secretary of the Leith Branch of the Amalgamated Seamen's and Firemen's Union, in the Edinburgh Sheriff Court, Mr. D. Blackman, delegate of the Edinburgh Trades Council, appointed to watch the proceedings, and Mr. E. Robson, also a member of the Trades Council, were refused admission to the Court during the proceedings;

whether he is aware that the policeman informed these two gentlemen that his orders were to keep every one out, although at the time of the application there was considerable vacant room in the Court; whether the Judge issued such orders for the exclusion of the public; and under what authority such orders for the exclusion of the public from a public trial were given?

*The LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. Robertson, Bute): I am informed that the two gentlemen named in the question applied for admission before the jury was balloted for, and were refused on account of the Court being then full. After the ballot, a number of those jurymen who were not required to act, and some other persons, left the Court, and had these two gentlemen presented themselves then at the public entrance they would have been admitted as a matter of course. So far as is known, no one was refused admission except when the Court happened to be full. No orders were issued by the Judge, or any one in authority, for the exclusion of the public; and the officials merely carried out a standing order of the Court, that no greater number of persons be admitted than there is sitting accommodation for. The trial in question excited considerable interest, and the Court was very full during most of the time it lasted.

RAJA BROOKE.

Mr. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he can give any information as to the position of affairs between the Sultan of Brunei and Raja Brooke; and if the Sultan has addressed any further protest to the Government.

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): Her Majesty's Government are awaiting a full Report from Her Majesty's Consul at Brunei, who proceeded to his post at the end of last year. Representations have been received from the Sultan, and he has been informed in reply that full inquiry will be made on the arrival of the Consul, and that it is hoped that an arrangement satisfactory to His Highness will be effected.

Mr. Buchanan

ANGLO-PORTUGUESE INDIAN TREATIES.

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if any Papers will be presented explaining the motives for and the circumstances under which Her Majesty's Government have denounced the Treaties with Portugal regarding the Indian Possessions of the two countries, as notified in the *Gazette* of March 10th?

Sir J. FERGUSSON: The Goa Treaty of 1878 is considered by the Government of India to have been found in practice a disadvantageous arrangement, and to require alteration in certain of its provisions. At their request instructions were sent to Her Majesty's Minister at Lisbon to denounce the Treaty under the provision contained in its 22nd Article. The Government of India are, however, willing to renew the Treaty on suitable terms, and negotiations will shortly be opened at Lisbon with that object. It is not intended to present any Papers on the subject at present.

FEE-CHARGING SCHOOLS IN GLASGOW.

Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether any change has been made in the fees charged in fee-charging public schools in Glasgow since the Auditor General in December last scheduled four of them, on their own statement of facts, as disqualified, through the amount of fees charged, from participation in the Education Grant; whether any investigation of facts, as repeatedly suggested by the Auditor General, has been made by the Department into the accounts of any of the other fee-charging public schools in Glasgow; and whether the Scotch Education Department contests the opinion expressed by the Auditor General that the ordinary and additional grants to State-aided schools are so far homogeneous that, when a school is ineligible for the ordinary grant, it cannot participate in the additional grant?

*Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I am not aware that any change has been made in the fees of the schools referred to; but the whole of the hon. Member's question arises out of points on which the

Scotch Education Department and the Comptroller and Auditor General are not in agreement. These points have consequently been brought before the Public Accounts Committee, who will shortly, I understand, have them under consideration. In these circumstances, I am not in a position to discuss the points.

POST OFFICE PUNISHMENTS.

EARL COMPTON (York, W.R., Barnsley): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether it is a fact, as reported in the Press, that C. A. Lowe, a first-class postman attached to the E.C. Post Office, who had completed 17 years' service and was in receipt of 32s. a week, when off duty and in private clothes got into trouble with a policeman and, being charged, was fined 20s.; whether he was further punished by the Post Office authorities by being reduced to the second class, with wages of 23s. a week; whether this reduction is permanent; whether C. A. Lowe's character has been good in the past; and whether there is any precedent for punishing in so severe a manner a Post Office *employé* who has got into trouble when off duty?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The facts generally are as stated by the noble Lord. It was a question whether Lowe should not be dismissed, but I adopted a more lenient course in reducing him to the second class. Whether he remains permanently on that class must depend upon his conduct in future.

EARL COMPTON: I would repeat the last sentence of my question.

*MR. RAIKES: Really, Sir, I am not aware whether there are any precedents. I hope there are not many. This man's conduct was extremely bad.

EARL COMPTON: May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman will make inquiry as to whether the man has been before a Magistrate and punished by him; and whether a Magistrate who punishes a Post Office *employé* takes into account the fact that he will also be punished in his employment to the tune of something like 11s. a week?

*MR. RAIKES: I do not think I am bound so to graduate punishments as to make them fit in with the views which any particular Magistrate may hold. I have to look at the conduct of the men, and if I find that a man makes a grossly aggravated assault on the police after behaving in a manner which leads to the suspicion that he is going to commit a burglary, I must severely punish him if I do not dismiss him from the Service.

RENTS IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES OF INDIA.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether a re-settlement of the Central Provinces has been proceeding during the past three years, and whether as regards some villages the rents have been raised some 40, some 50, and some even 100 per cent.; and whether the Secretary of State will obtain and lay on the Table particulars showing, district by district, in the Nagpur, Chattisgarb, Jubbulpore, and Nerbudda Divisions, the rent at which they were assessed under the old settlement and the rates which it is intended the tenants shall pay under the new settlement?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): The answer to the first question is, Yes. As to the second question, the Secretary of State will call for particulars of the results of re-settlement so far as they have proceeded. None have yet, so far as the Secretary of State is aware, been made in the Nagpur or Nerbudda Divisions. He will consider whether the Papers, when received, can be laid on the Table.

PRESUMPTION OF LIFE LIMITATION (SCOTLAND) ACT.

MR. BUCHANAN: I wish to ask the Lord Advocate when he will introduce his Bill to amend the Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Act?

*MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: On Monday.

THE LAIRG POSTMASTERSHIP.

MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I desire to ask the Postmaster General whether Mr. Robert Munro has been appointed Postmaster at Lairg, Sutherlandshire; and, if so, upon whose recommendation; whether he has received a Petition, signed by 147 householders within the postal district of Lairg, disapproving of the appointment of Mr. Munro, on the ground that they had no confidence in him for the office; and whether, in view of this circumstance, and of the importance of the Lairg Post Office, he will re-consider the appointment?

*Mr. RAIKES: Mr. Robert Munro has been nominated by the Treasury as Postmaster at Lairg, and will in due course be appointed if found to be eligible and qualified, from a Post Office point of view, for the situation. A Memorial on the subject has, I believe, been received, and is under consideration; but the ground on which the Memorialists base their objection to Mr. Munro's appointment, namely, that he is engaged in business of the same kind as that of other merchants in the town, would not, in my opinion, be a sufficient reason for cancelling the nomination.

Mr. ANGUS SUTHERLAND: Will the right hon. Gentleman inform us if the Petitioners objected to Mr. Munro on any other grounds than that he is engaged in business?

*Mr. RAIKES: I am not aware of any other grounds having being stated in the Petition. But the Memorial is not addressed to me. A copy of the Memorial reached the Post Office without any signatures attached to it.

CONSULAR REPORTS FOR INFORMATION OF EMIGRANTS.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been drawn to the numerous delusive or misleading prospectuses and other circulars, emanating from various foreign countries, addressed to intending emigrants, and largely circulated in the United Kingdom, and to the misfortunes which often befall persons who, on the faith of these documents, emigrate to places where they find the advantages they have been led to expect are wholly wanting; whether the Government have considered the possibility of taking means to make better known the substance of the valuable Reports, bearing on the prospects which various foreign countries offer to emigrants, which are received from British Diplomatic and Consular Agents abroad, and to promote the wider diffusion of those publications of the Emigrants' Information Office which are largely based on these Reports; whether, in particular, they have considered, or will consider, whether some summary of the above-mentioned Reports, embodying their salient points so far as necessary for the warning of emigrants, could be annually issued in such manner as to give it a good chance of wide diffusion; and if he could state what other methods, if any, are available for the purpose of conveying to those who most need it that information regarding the less desirable fields for emigration which at present exists but fails to secure the requisite publicity?

Baron H. de WORMS: Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to answer the question. It is difficult to see what special machinery can be devised for more promptly dealing with the misleading prospectuses and circulars addressed to intending emigrants; but the matter has already been several times brought to the notice of Her Majesty's Consuls, and will be brought to that of the emigration officers of the Board of Trade. Any information so received will be placed at once at the disposal of the Emigrants' Information Office for publication. In future it is contemplated that that office, in addition to its present pamphlets and newspaper notices, shall cause printed warnings to be exhibited as occasion arises at the various ports of the United Kingdom, and compile an annual summary as suggested. Other means of diffusing the desired information have been, and will be, carefully considered.

INCOME TAX—INSURERS IN AMERICAN COMPANIES.

Mr. THEODORE FRY (Darlington): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will now take steps to allow a rebate of Income Tax to insurers in American companies doing business in this country; and, if not, on what ground he justifies this difference of treatment amongst British taxpayers on whom alone the loss falls?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): The question whether persons who insure in American companies can claim rebate of Income Tax on their premiums has been authoritatively settled by the Courts, and I am not prepared to propose any alteration in the law. The difference of treatment of British and of American Insurance Companies does not rest on merely technical grounds. Persons who insure in British companies are advantaged by rebate of Income Tax on their premiums, but the companies themselves pay Income Tax on their investments. Foreign companies who hold investments abroad are advantaged by having no Income Tax to pay on their investments, and there is therefore no claim for remission of the tax on the premiums paid.

GLEBE LAND AT SAXLINGHAM.

Mr. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he can state the reason why 38a. 3r. 27p. of glebe land at Saxlingham, belonging to the rectory of Thetford St. Cuthbert, Norfolk, were sold for £112, or less than £3 an acre, as stated in the Return of Glebe Lands (Sales) recently presented to Parliament; who was the purchaser of the said land; and if £3 per acre is the average price of land in that locality?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Chaplin, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I am informed that the property in question was in a deplorable condition, entirely uncultivated, one mass of water grass and weeds, the arable part of it, upwards of 35 acres, not having been ploughed for years, the surface soil very thin and strong, on a subsoil of tenacious clay, and the property altogether of a very undesirable character. For four years previous to 1888 no tenant could be found for the farm, which is nearly 50 miles from the benefice of Thetford, to which it belonged, and the tenant to whom it was afterwards let was unable to pay any rent. For these reasons, and because it was a source of trouble and anxiety to the incumbent, and for the interest of the benefice, the property was sold. The land is subject to a tithe rent-charge, and the purchaser was Mr. Frederick Wilson, a farmer, living about two miles distant. The case is quite exceptional, and there is no reason to suppose that £3 an acre is the average selling price of land in the locality.

PURCHASE OF HOLDINGS.

Mr. ESSLEMONT (Aberdeen, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture how he proposes to meet the difficulties which Local Authorities will experience in obtaining good and cheap holdings to meet the requirements of the various districts if the price is fixed by Her Majesty's Government at 30 years' purchase?

Mr. CHAPLIN: The hon. Member must be aware that it would be altogether unusual and most inconvenient for a Minister to explain the provisions of a Bill not yet introduced by way of question and answer across the floor of the House. I am afraid, with no intention whatever of discourtesy to the hon. Member, that that is the only reply that I can give him. I may add that to the assumption contained in the question that the price of holdings is to be fixed by the Government at 30 years' purchase, or at any other number of years' purchase, is purely gratuitous.

THE EXPLOSIONS IN GLASGOW.

Dr. CAMERON. I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the two fatal and mysterious explosions which have this week occurred in ironworks in Glasgow; and whether, with a view to preventing similar catastrophes, he will follow the practice adopted by the Home Office on various previous occasions in Scotland, and institute a special public inquiry into the causes of these disastrous occurrences?

Mr. PROVAND (Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.) also asked the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been drawn to an extraordinary accident which occurred at Dixon's Iron Works, in Glasgow, on Tuesday last, which resulted in the loss of five lives; and if he will direct an inquiry to be made into the circumstances of the accident in order to discover its cause?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart-Wortley, Sheffield, Hallam): I will answer this question and that of the hon. Member for the Blackfriars Division of Glasgow (Mr. Provand) at the same time. The Crown Agent has called the Secretary of State's attention to one fatal accident at Dixon and Co.'s chemical works, and states that at present no idea can be formed of the origin of the explosion, and that until the *débris* has been removed, which is now being done, no inspection can be made. The case presents certain difficulties, as the work in question was peculiar of its kind, no similar work being, I believe, in operation elsewhere in Scotland. The Chief Inspector of Explosives informs the Secretary of State that, as far as he can judge at present, the case is entirely outside the Explosives Act; but should the preliminary inquiry give reason to believe that the accident was the result of any explosive material within that Act, the Secretary of State would be prepared to order an inquiry by one of his officers. The place has been visited by an Inspector of Factories. We have not yet received his Report. Should the case seem to the Secretary of State to call for special inquiry other than that provided by the Explosives Act, he will communicate with the Secretary for Scotland with a view of determining what shape the inquiry should take.

Dr. CAMERON : I will ask a further question on the subject in a few days, and perhaps the hon. Member will then be able to give me more information.

THE INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS BILL.

Sir ALBERT ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that the Inflammable Liquids Bill applies detrimentally to a great number of very important industries which have no connection with the petroleum trade, and that in the opinion of influential representatives of these trades sufficient steps have not been taken in framing the Bill to safeguard the interests of these industries; and whether he is prepared to re-consider the provisions of the Bill on this point?

Mr. STUART WORTLEY : Yes, Sir; I am quite aware that there are several industries outside the immediate petroleum trade to which the Inflammable Liquids Bill will apply, but the great majority of these industries are already subject to the provisions of the existing law. In those cases where the proposed extension of the law will include new industries and products, I shall be fully prepared to consider any representations from the trade which, having due regard to public safety, will justify Amendments to the present Bill.

EX-SULTAN ABDULLAH OF PERAK.

Mr. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I wish to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he will lay upon the Table the Correspondence between the Government of Mauritius and the Colonial Office with reference to the case of the ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak?

Baron H. de WORMS: I do not think any useful object would be served in laying the Correspondence on the Table of the House. I should be happy to show it to the hon. Member if he calls on me at the Colonial Office.

WESTPORT AND MULRANNY RAILWAY.

Dr. TANNER: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any artizans not belonging to the County of Mayo and district concerned are employed on the Westport and Mulranny line of Light Railway; and, if so, how many are thus employed?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): I am afraid I am not in a position to give the hon. Member any information on this subject.

Dr. TANNER: I will put the question down for next Friday.

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I shall not be able to give the hon. Member an answer, as the matter does not rest with me.

Dr. TANNER: With whom does it rest then?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: The persons who employ the labour.

LONDON SCHOOL BOARD ELECTIONS BILL.

Mr. MAPLE (Camberwell, Dulwich): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he has received a Memorial from the Chairman of the School Board for London, asking that facilities be granted for the passing of the London School Board Elections Bill, now down for Second Reading on Friday the 6th instant, in view of the triennial election which takes place next November; and if the Government are prepared to support the measure?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): I have received the Memorial referred to; but I am not able to give any pledge to give facilities for the passing of the London School Board Elections Bill, a measure which, I understand, does away with the cumulative vote.

PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL.

MR. L. FRY (Bristol, N.) for Viscount WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when he expects to be able to make the Motion to nominate the Members of the Select Committee on the Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: In the course of next week.

MR. STOREY, M.P., AND THE SUNDERLAND POLICE.

MR. WHARTON (York, W.R., Ripon): I beg to ask the Home Secretary whether he is aware that on Saturday last a charge was brought before the County Bench at Sunderland, composed of 10 Magistrates, of assault against two County Police superintendents—Burrell and Oliver (the former being deputy chief constable); that the hearing lasted till 8.45 p.m.; that the charge was unanimously dismissed by the Bench in Burrell's case, with costs against the prosecutor, Mr. Samuel Storey, M.P., and that the charge against Superintendent Oliver was withdrawn by the prosecutor?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I have seen in various local newspapers accounts of these proceedings confirming the facts as stated.

JUDICIAL RENTS.

SIR T. ESMONDE (for Mr. P. J. POWER, Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if a Sub-Commission is soon to sit to hear applications for the fixing of judicial rents in the Unions of Kilmacthomas and Waterford; and, if so, about what date; and if not, whether, in view of the number of tenants in those districts anxious to have judicial rents fixed, a Sub-Commission will be sent there?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Commissioners report that they intend to send a Sub-Commission to County Waterford at an early date.

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACTS (DEFAULT OF INSTALMENTS).

Order [16th February] for a Return thereto read, and discharged; and, instead thereof:—

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) ACTS (DEFAULT OF INSTALMENTS).

Return ordered—

"Of Particulars respecting Holdings in Ireland put up for sale by the Land Commission up to the 14th day of February 1891, in consequence of failure in payment of Instalments of purchase money, in the following form:—

	By whom sold.	1.
	Name of defaulting purchaser.	2.
	County and parish in which holding is situate.	3.
	Date of purchase.	4.
	Area of holding.	5.
	Valuation.	6.
	Rental.	7.
	Purchase money.	8.
	Amount of Instalments paid.	9.
	Amount of Instalments in default.	10.
	Date of sale for default.	11.
	Sum realised at sale.	12.
	Remarks.	13.

—(*Mr. John Ellis.*)

TEXTILE TRADES (HOURS AND WAGES OF HALF-TIMERS).

Return ordered—

“Of the number of Children between the ages of 10 and 12 employed as ‘Half-Timers.’ in the Textile Trades in the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire:”

“And, Return, to be furnished by the Factory Inspectors, of the approximate Weekly Wages earned by such Children when in regular employment as ‘Half-Timers,” in the following form:—

	Lancashire.	Approximate Weekly Wage.	Yorkshire.	Appropriate Weekly Wage.
Number of Children “Half-Timers” between 10 and 11 years of age. ..				
Number of Children “Half-Timers” between 11 and 12 years of age. ..				

—(*Mr. Elliott Lees.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled “An Act to make better provision for the Elementary Education of Blind and Deaf Children in England and Wales.” [Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf) Bill [Lords.]

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure, the following Fifteen Members in respect of the Penal Servitude Bill, viz.: Mr. Arthur Acland, Mr. Gainsford Bruce, Mr. Coleridge, Mr. W. H. Cross, Mr. Cuninghame Graham, Mr. Alfred Gathorne-Hardy, Mr. Gurdon, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Lloyd-George, Mr. Mount, Mr. H. Fell Pease, Mr. Roche, Mr. Talbot, Mr. Howard Vincent, and Mr. Wharton.

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY further reported; That they had discharged the following Members from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping and Manufacture: Mr. Rathbone and Sir George Trevelyan; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. Shaw Lefevre, and Mr. Provand.

Report to lie upon the Table.

MOTIONS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY AND WAYS AND MEANS).

Motion made, and Question proposed,

“That the Reports of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed; and the Proceedings thereon shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the Sittings of the House except of Standing Order No, 5.”—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I would ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it was not understood when the 12 o'Clock Rule was passed that it should not be suspended save for the purpose of enabling important discussions to be concluded for the convenience of the House; and whether the proposition he makes to-night is for that purpose or merely to enable the Government to continue discussions on Report of Supply to any hour of the morning?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Motion is not for the purpose of enabling discussions to be extended to unreasonable hours, but the object is merely to enable Reports of Supply and Ways and Means to be taken after 12 o'clock at night. If the Motion is not carried a Money Bill might be delayed, and that delay would be fatal to the object we all have in view, I believe—that is to say, a seasonable adjournment at Easter.

Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): May I ask whether it is to be distinctly understood that the Motion will not be used for allowing Votes to be taken after midnight when discussions on those Votes have, by arrangement, been postponed until the Report stage; and also whether it will be understood that, as soon as the Report stages of Supply and Ways and Means are disposed of, the business of the House will conclude?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Certainly. The Motion does not extend to other business, and I think the experience of the past year will satisfy the right hon. Gentleman that whenever an arrangement is made between the Government Benches and right hon. Gentlemen opposite that an opportunity shall be afforded for discussion on Report staess of Supply, that Report will be taken at a time to allow of such discussion. That has been the practice on both sides.

Mr. H. GARDNER: Will the Motion apply to the whole of the present Session?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Certainly.

Mr. H. GARDNER: Then I shall oppose it.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): May I ask why the right hon. Gentleman has put down this Motion? Is it necessary? Up to now have we not taken Report of Supply after 12 o'clock?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: If to-night any hon. Member were to object to our proceeding with Report of Supply or Committee of Ways and Means, those Orders would have to stand over until Monday, and the holidays would be deferred certainly till Thursday, and perhaps until Saturday week.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I would ask whether we are to understand that in the event of a Debate on Report of Supply or of Ways and Means being protracted until 1 o'clock, the ordinary limit of time for the Sitting of the House, and the business of the Report being at an end, some Member of the Government will move the Adjournment of the House?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That would be contrary to the Standing Orders, which provide that, after any business exempted from the operation of the Resolution is disposed of, the remainder of the business will be dealt with in accordance with the Rules relating to business after 12 o'clock. No doubt it is inconvenient to proceed with business after 1 o'clock, but it is necessary that the Orders should be gone through in order that hon. Members may make arrangements as to the days on which their Bills are to be again set down.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I am not asking the Government to alter the Standing Orders at all, but to give an undertaking that, in the circumstances I have referred to, they will move the Adjournment of the House, which would override any Standing Order.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I shall certainly use any influence I possess in the direction of preventing the transacting of any business after 1 o'clock. My desire is to meet the convenience of the House as far as I possibly can. I will consult with the Speaker and the Officers of the House; but from my own experience, I would strongly urge that there should be no change on the present system. It is, no doubt, inconvenient that opportunity should be taken after 1 o'clock to get a stage of a measure. As far as my influence goes, I will certainly discourage anything of that kind in every possible way; but I do not think it will be desirable to alter the Standing Order.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: Will the Government undertake not to allow a stage of a Bill to be taken after 1 o'clock?

*(5.1.) Mr. W. H. SMITH: There may possibly be some cases in which an exception should be made, but I have no hesitation in saying that that will be the practical result unless there is any such exception. I am anxious not to enter into any pledge from which at a future day I might be charged with having departed. There may be cases which would fully justify an exception, and I undertake that if I do depart from the understanding I will justify the departure. For instance, there may be a measure like the Seed Potatoes Bill, which it is most desirable to pass through, but with such an understanding my hands would be absolutely tied,

(5.2.) Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): It is more with reference to Private than to Government Bills that the Government are asked to give an undertaking, and I ask for an assurance that the Government will not allow Private Bills to be advanced a stage after 1 o'clock.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I will undertake that that shall be done.

Mr. H. GARDNER: What are we about to do? Is this a proposal for a limited period or for the remainder of the Session?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The course I propose is that which the House has taken in the five past Sessions.

Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): The right hon. Gentleman says that this Motion has been made for five years, but I think if he will look into the matter he will find it has never been made so early in the Session. I shall, therefore, move as an Amendment words providing that the Motion shall only remain in force until Easter. Let us try it for the next 10 days, and see how it works. The present state of public business is not backward, and there can be no necessity for thus setting aside the Standing Orders in such a sweeping fashion.

Amendment proposed, after the word "That," to insert the words "until the House adjourns for Easter."—(*Mr. J. E. Ellis.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(5.5.) The House divided:—Ayes 89; Noes 197.—(Div. List, No. 87.)

Main Question again proposed.

Sir W. HARCOURT: What will be the business taken at the Morning Sitting on Tuesday?

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Have we now an absolute pledge that no Public Bills will be taken after the hour when, in ordinary circumstances, they cannot be taken if objected to? Will the opponents of Public Bills be able to go home to bed at night without fear that the Bills will be slipped through in their absence on the plea that the Government suddenly came to the conclusion it was an exceptional Bill?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I had hoped that the House had understood the statement which I made. I cannot go beyond it. On Tuesday, at the Morning Sitting, the Government propose to take the Ways and Means Bill, the Savings Banks Bill, and the Public Health Bills.

Mr. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): Will the Lords Amendments to the Tithes Bill be taken before Easter?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I hope the Lords Amendments to the Tithes Bill will be considered before Easter. When the Bill comes down from the other House I shall be able to speak more positively.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I do not intend to oppose the adoption of the right hon. Gentleman's Resolution, but I should like to express the opinion that, by the unwise course which the First Lord of the Treasury proposes to take, he will lessen his opportunities of expediting public business rather than increase them. The Government would have done better to have waited until there had been factious opposition to Report of Supply. It is well the Government should now understand that if we adopt this Motion it will not do for them to attempt to shorten Debate in Committee of Supply on a promise that the discussion shall be renewed on Report.

*Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, considering that the Public Health Bills are so voluminous, and that they were only issued this morning, it would be right to take them into consideration on Tuesday? We have seldom had an opportunity of discussing important Sanitary Bills at any length, and, therefore, I appeal to the Government not to force them on so soon.

*Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): The Bills must be referred to various Local Authorities for report thereon; and before we discuss them, it is very desirable that Metropolitan Members should be placed in possession of the views of those bodies.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: There are two Bills relating to the subject of Public Health; and as it is very desirable that the law on the subject should be amended, I hope that the Bills will, as soon as possible, be sent before the Standing Committee. One of these Bills contains a great many provisions for the consolidation and amendment of the law; and if a strong disinclination to proceed with that Bill on Tuesday should be manifested, the Government will not bring it forward. I hope, however, that we shall be allowed to take it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That the Reports of the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means may be entered upon at any hour, though opposed; and the Proceedings thereon shall not be interrupted under the provisions of any Standing Order regulating the Sittings of the House, except of Standing Order No. V.

MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS (MARRIED WOMEN'S DISABILITIES REMOVAL) BILL.

On Motion of Dr. Clark, Bill to amend the Law relating to the Disabilities of Married Women in Municipal and other local Elections, ordered to be brought in by Dr. Clark, Mr. Jacob Bright, Sir Algernon Borthwick, and Mr. Justin M'Carthy.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 246.]

CHARITIES' RECOVERY BILL.

On Motion of Sir Walter Foster, Bill to facilitate the recovery of Rent-charges and other Payments owing to Charities, ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster, Mr. James William Lowther, Sir Richard Paget, Mr. Whitbread, and Mr. Seale-Hayne.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 247.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

LOCAL TAXATION.

(5.25.) Mr. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I rise, Sir,

"To call attention to the unfair incidence of Local Taxation in London and other large towns; and to move, 'That, in the opinion of this House, the freeholders and owners of ground values in the Metropolis ought to contribute directly a substantial share of Local Taxation.'"

*(5.26.) Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order! I wish to call attention to the position in which this Motion stands. The House will remember that the Town Holdings Committee, which has sat for several years, was re-appointed in 1889; but, owing to want of time, was not able to make a Report last Session. Two days ago that Committee was re-appointed for the purpose of inquiring into a special subject, namely,

"The question of imposing a direct assessment on all owners of ground rents, and on the owners of increased values imparted to lands by building operations or other improvements."

Thus the subject referred to the Committee is very much the same subject as that embodied in the hon. Member's Motion. I have not thought it right to interfere as a matter of Order, and to say that the hon. Member would not be in order in bringing this subject forward; but I think it is my duty to call attention to a course which certainly is unusual and, in my opinion, inconvenient. The Committee was only appointed two days ago, and has begun to take evidence, and the hon. Member proposes by a Motion to ask the opinion of the House upon one of the very points referred to that Committee. I know no precedent for the course which the hon. Member wishes to take, but I know no precedent against it, and I think it best to leave the matter to the judgment of the House.

*(5.29.) The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): After what has fallen from the Speaker, I must appeal to the hon. Member opposite not to create a precedent which may be found most inconvenient. I believe that on no occasion within recent Parliamentary history has a subject been debated in this House when it has already been specifically referred to a Select Committee for consideration. A Committee partakes largely of the nature of a jury, it being their duty to examine and weigh evidence for and against a proposal, and to interfere with their deliberations by a Debate in this House can hardly be right. The precedent which the hon. Member opposite wishes to establish would, I fear, result in destroying the authority of Committees of that House, and tend to produce among hon. Members an unwillingness to take part in the work of a tribunal whose deliberations might at any time be interrupted by Debates in the House.

(5.30.) Mr. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): Sir, had I believed that the hon. Gentleman was introducing an innovation into Parliamentary practice, I should have been much disposed to have joined in the appeal of the right hon. Gentleman. But with very great respect, and undoubtedly with some reserve, because I have had no opportunity of fortifying my recollection, I venture to say that the right hon. Gentleman is under a misapprehension as to the practice of the House. I have in my recollection, though I do not like to give particulars to the House when I am not quite certain of them, a very important and conspicuous case in which, while a matter was under the consideration of a Committee, it was raised as the subject of Debate in this House, and very important consequences followed on that Debate, notwithstanding the fact that the Committee was sitting. I am quite certain that when Committees have been sitting, I have—when sitting on that Bench—used the argument that a subject with which I was desirous of getting rid of should go before a Committee. I am bound to say that that argument was received either with apathy or with symptoms of impatience by the House. It may be assumed with confidence that I am within the mark when I say that the right hon. Gentleman is not quite correct in his recollection of the practice of the House.

*(5.33.) MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I venture respectfully to draw attention to two precedents in connection with this very Committee. In the first place, it was appointed to consider the tenure of houses, and afterwards there was referred to it the subject of leasehold enfranchisement. Though it had not reported in 1889 a Debate took place on the Second Reading of the Leasehold Enfranchisement Bill; in fact, the Report was not presented until three months after that. The second precedent was this: In 1886 a Motion was submitted by Mr. William Saunders, then Member for Hull, covering the ground of this Motion, and it was referred to the Committee. Subsequently, Professor Thorold Rogers moved a Resolution to the effect that the owners of the ground value should be made to contribute towards local taxation. I venture to think that those are two exact precedents. As a matter of fact, the present Motion does not cover the entire Reference to the Committee, inasmuch as it deals only with the Metropolis, and not with the general question which is under the consideration of the Committee. Besides, that part of the Reference affecting the Metropolis has already been dealt with, and there only

remain to be dealt with the Scotch feu system, and some other cases outside London. I venture to submit that on the present occasion it is very important that we should lay down a principle which the Committee may be able to apply in their Report.

(5.40.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury made the observation that a practice of this kind might discourage Members serving on Committees. I may remind the right hon. Gentleman that it has been the practice within the last year or two to dispose of questions by referring them either to a Committee or to a Royal Commission, and such a practice might have the effect of closing the mouth of this House altogether. If you can only get a question referred to a Royal Commission, you may be sure that for three years the subject will not be heard of further. And if the Government go on pursuing this course of referring everything to Committees or to Royal Commissions, it is conceivable that the House might be dispossessed of such a subject, for instance, as the labour question for years to come.

*(5.42.) MR. W. H. SMITH: May I say one word on this matter? The right hon. Gentleman appeared to suggest that the Government desired to shelve a question of this kind by referring it to a Committee. We could not, and should not, advise the House that the system of ground rents was one which ought to be absolutely and unconditionally abolished. We hoped the House would be disposed to adopt the view of referring this Motion to a Committee which is already dealing with the subject, and all I desired to do was to represent to the House the inconvenience of discussing the question. So far as the Government are concerned, if it is the desire of the House to proceed with the discussion, we are quite prepared to so.

*(5.43.) MR. J. STUART: I wish to put the right hon. Gentleman's even-mindedness to the test. If it be that this question is still under the consideration of the Committee, and the Government are desirous that this question shall not trouble the House, then will they do what the County Council for two years asked them to do, namely,

pass an Act through this House or pass a Resolution in this House which shall show that the opinion of this House is that as to contracts for leases, and as to the bearing of rates and taxes, any future contracts which contract either party out of the rates or taxes will not hold good. The London County Council has petitioned this House in favour of a change in the law such as that which I suggest. It is quite clear that the existence of contracts puts a great deal of difficulty in the way of any change of the law. Will that change be facilitated by Her Majesty's Government? I am not asking anything new. In 1870 the Chancellor of the Exchequer said it was against public policy to allow landlords and tenants to contract themselves out of the rates, and he actually brought in a Bill to deal with the matter. Now, I am desirous of bringing this subject before the House, even though the Committee be sitting. I say nothing of the fact that the Committee has been sitting for five years, and if it continues to sit it would prevent the free discussion of this subject for years in the House. Sir, this question is not only ripe, but it is rotting for discussion. The subject was before a Committee of this House in 1866, and that Committee reported that the burdens upon the ratepayers of London—I have got the words here—had been incurred for the purpose of supplying wants arising from defects of former administration of the affairs of the Metropolis, and of effecting improvements which tended to increase the value of property. And that Committee reported in favour of some part of the expense being thrown upon the landlords. In 1867 the Government proposed that a threepenny improvement rate should be charged on to owners. The Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1870 proposed that the occupier should have power to deduct half his rates from the rent; and in 1871 he introduced a Bill on the subject, and he then used the very arguments I hope to use this evening. Under these circumstances it is not at all a new thing to ask, what is asked in the Petition of the County Council, that while the proper mode is being settled to relieve the ratepayers, an Act should be passed to insure that the future rates shall fall on the persons who shall be indicated as proper to bear the burden of the rates. I ask the Chancellor of the Exchequerr, with that Petition before him, and with the utterances he has himself made, whether he is prepared to introduce any measure or Resolution to carry out the object of that Petition. If he is, I am perfectly willing to withdraw my Motion, but on no other condition. Hon. Members on this side of the House who represent the Metropolis have decided it is well to confine the Motion to the Metropolis, and that the question, as it affects London, should be looked at in itself. There are many points which differentiate the Metropolis from other parts of the country. In London is paid one quarter of the whole rates paid in England and Wales. Our rateable value is one-fifth of the whole rateable value of England and Wales; our debt is one-fifth of the whole local debt of England and Wales. These striking figures render the case of the Metropolis peculiarly urgent. I had occasion in 1888, when the right hon. Gentleman was passing the Local Government Bill, to call attention to the scant justice which the Metropolis received, and to show that while relief to the extent of nearly a 4d. rate was given by that measure in other parts of the country, the relief afforded to the ratepayers in London amounted to only 1¾d. The answer given me was that the Metropolis had in the past received more assistance from the Consolidated Fund than other parts of the country. But if you take the total subventions given in relief of local burdens you will find that the Metropolis receives one-sixth of the total amount given to the country. If it were relieved in proportion to its rateable value, which I take to be a fair method, it would be better by £150,000 than it now is. The only grant made to us was that given by the Home Secretary, who gave us no less than one-half of the sum granted for police superannuation. But that goes a very small way indeed towards correcting the difference, because the expense of the police of the Metropolis, whom we cannot control, is not much short of one-half of the whole expenditure of the police of England and Wales. It is, in fact, £1,500,000 out of £3,800,000. I think I have made out a case which differentiates the Metropolis to a considerable extent. Let me take the case of the debt of the Metropolis. Altogether it is about £40,000,000. The total local debt of the whole of England is something like £200,000,000. That is to say, the debt of London is one-fifth of the whole. But there are peculiarities of the debt of London which make that comparison very misleading. Because I am within the mark when I say that one-half of the local debt of £150,000,000 in other parts of the country is for remunerative works, such as gas and water undertakings. So that, in other words—of the local debt which really comes upon the pockets of the ratepayers, and which is for other than commercial purposes, one-third is located in London. The main part of the Metropolitan debt, £30,000,000 of it, has been contracted for permanent improvements, which increase the value of property in the neighbourhood. The amount of money spent in London on permanent improvements is out of sight greater than the amount that has been spent in any part of the country in the same ways. I think, therefore, I have made a fair division of this matter in order to bring it before the House, from the point of view of the Metropolis. But this debt for permanent improvement is not all that has been spent in the last 30 years. We have already paid off £10,000,000, so that £40,000,000 is not at all an over-statement of the amount. This is a question which affects not only persons rich enough to occupy houses, but the poor who live in lodgings and tenement houses are all affected in proportion to the rent they have to pay. It is a question deeply affecting those who pay the debts of the past and have to discharge the debts still to be incurred for the permanent improvement of the Metropolis. But it is said, when you make a bargain with the ground landlords, they take into consideration that these rates will come upon them. The ground landlord comes into the reversion of many things—the house built upon the land; the improvements made by his tenant; and the increased value of his property arising from "unearned increment." But how is that met? It is met out of the rates, out of the pockets of the occupiers. There is not a Member of this House who will deny that the residual value of the permanent improvements of London is to be found in the enhanced value of the property of the ground landlords and of the freeholders. The right hon. Gentleman will say that they can take account of that in their bargain. Have they done so? Since the year 1831 more than 60 per cent. of the houses in London, whether you take them by numbers or value, have been erected, and their leases have been made. I take the year 1831, because, speaking generally, none of the leases made in that year will be in existence after 1931. By that time four-fifths of the whole present debt of London will be paid off. It is in process of paying up to 1941. Now, the leases, which will have fallen in by that year, refer to two-thirds of the houses of London, and when they fall into the new landlord's hands he will have to make his bargain, and he will then take into account the coming rates for new and wider improvements, which will enhance the value of his property; but it is to be remembered that the whole of the improved value of two-thirds of the houses of London whose leases have expired—an improved value resulting from permanent improvements, the debt for which will then have been paid off—will fall into the hands of the ground landlords. It may be said that many of these leases were made in expectation of the coming rates. But does that apply to anything like them all? On the contrary, one half of those I have named, or one-third of the whole houses of London, were built and leased between the years 1831 and 1861. I take these dates because they go by censuses. By the year 1861, the Metropolitan Board of Works had only begun to get into action, and it was during the major part of that 30 years to which I refer that a third part of London was built. There was no expectation of any kind whatever that there would be any rates for the permanent improvement of London, or that if there were, they would not be treated as the sewers and other rates had been treated. Therefore, one-third of the property of London is at this moment absolutely demonstrably escaping entirely from paying any contribution towards permanent improvements. Hon. Gentlemen may very well ask what is the amount of the rise in value of the property I am referring to—a rise in value which I attribute largely to the expenditure made out of the pockets of the ratepayers. The annual valuation of London shows an increase year by year. This is owing to the fact that, besides the new buildings and additions to buildings, an added value has been put by the valuers on the property generally throughout London. If the annual valuations are separated from the quinquennial re-valuations, it is found that London increases by £550,000 a year of rateable value, so far as new buildings and improvements are concerned. In other words, the annual rent is increased by that sum from new buildings and improvements. But every year an additional value of £300,000 is given to London. Part of that added value, no doubt, may be traced to the stricter methods of assessment; but the major portion is to be attributed to an actual rise in the value of the place. I will take as an example the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square. In 1869 there took place a re-valuation in that parish, bringing the value of the property up to its full valuation. But since 1869 there has been an increase of £518,000 in the valuation of the parish; and of this £436,000 was added at the quinquennial valuations, showing that the increase has been due to an increase in the value of the property. No doubt others profit from these rises besides the ground landlords. There are the holders of the leases, and the intermediate reversioners, and these, with the ground landlords, share the possesion of the value of London. among them. Either of the bodies of reversioners could be taxed upon their reversions. I do not say I am proposing a tax on reversioners. In local taxation it is impossible to have anything like absolute justice; but it would only be just if, at least, the equivalent of some taxation on the reversioner could be contrived. The reversioner would then be made to pay for some part of the increased value which he is receiving on his property, and which has been brought about by an unforseen expenditure on the part of the occupier. No doubt the leaseholder himself, and also the occupier, profit from the increase of value; but the occupier does not have the whole of the profit, and he ought not to be compelled to pay for the whole. A division of rates between the owner and the occupier, such as the Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed, and the carrying back of a certain proportion after the manner of the Income Tax, is undoubtedly one of the elements of a fair distribution of burdens, but I wish to go further, and to get hold, for taxing purposes, of the reversioners. Then we come to the question of who pays the rates. There is no doubt whatever that the rates paid by the occupier in the agricultural parts of England are thrown on the owner. But in towns there is no doubt, on the other hand, that in many circumstances they remain upon the occupier. There are bargainings and arrangements in which the incidence of the rates is taken into account in settling the rent, and there are many instances in which it is impossible for a man who is paying the rates to get them deducted from his rent. The rates creep up little by little, and it is not easy to make an adjustment. I know that in London the occupier in the great majority of instances does not pay the rates directly. It has been estimated by Mr. Sargant that three out of four of the occupiers of London are not rated directly. I think that is an extravagant estimate, but but still the number is large. In that case the rates fall directly upon the owner, the first owner—I don't mean the ground landlord, but the owner nearest the occupier. However, one party may shovel the rates on the other, I maintain it is the duty of Parliament to make up its mind as to how the ultimate incidence would be just, and fix the incidence accordingly. You will then remove from the public mind a grievous misapprehension, as the advocates of the ground landlords call it, in the minds of the people. If we had a distribution of rates in proportion to the profit received from their expenditure, we should get rid of all those heartburnings and unfortunate conclusions which prevail amongst the vast multitude of the people, and we should get rid also of one of the greatest arguments in the mouths of the people who would go much further than myself, and would do positive injustice to the ground landlords. All I claim is that those who reap the profit should bear the burden.

Several methods have been suggested. The ground landlords would not pay a substantial share of the rates by the mere division of rates after the proposal of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, they would only pay a very small portion, for their property is mostly in reversion. I suggested a plan in the Housing of the Poor Bill of three years ago which has since been very ably amplified in a pamphlet by Mr. Moulton: that was for the separation of the valuation of land from the valuation of houses, handing back the rate in the same manner as the Income Tax, upon such portion of the joint value as is due to the land. I think there are objections to that method, and I have given it up, as by itself a complete solution of the question. But there are points in it which I am perfectly convinced might be applied in certain circumstances with great advantage. There is a proposition to bring the charge to bear on the reversions of the leases. That proposition was made in a Bill introduced by the hon. Member who will Second my Resolution, and who is better able to explain it than myself. No doubt under that Bill, as at present drafted, the burden would be too great upon the actual freeholder, the intermediate enjoyer of the value of the ground escaping with too little notice. But the fact that none of these proposals are complete is no argument against some portion of them or some combination of them being adopted. There is another method which, I think, has more in it perhaps than any of the methods alone, although not perhaps more in it than all of the others taken together, and that is the method of increasing the Succession Duty. The Succession Duty is absolutely unfair as compared with the Legacy Duty. If you take a property in personalty and a property in realty and assume the ages to be 35, and the relationship that of a nephew, you will find there is very nearly three times the Death Duty upon the personalty that there is upon the realty. I say there is no more fitting or proper subject for taxation for local purposes than the real property of towns, and there is no more easy and better method of reaching its owners than by an increase of the Death Duty, or at any rate by an increase of the Succession Duty. A Death Duty upon realty equal to the Death Duty on personalty would represent a tax upon owners who at present escape from taxation. The real property of London does not bear anything like the burden that land in agricultural districts bears. The owners of real property in London contract themselves out of the rates and bear none of the burdens which justly and equitably fall upon them. It is not only in the interest of the ratepayers but of the poor of London that we urge this measure upon the Government. The question of the housing of the poor hangs fire, and will hang fire until it is decided on whose backs these burdens are to rest, and it is just and right that before heavy additional expense is incurred in respect to the making of open spaces and broader streets, and other necessary improvements, we should require the Government of the country to endeavour to distribute these burdens aright. Without saying, at this point of the movement, that any specific one of these burdens ought to be borne by any particular person, I ask the House to make it clear that all those who profit largely by the expenditure of the rates must contribute a substantial share of the local taxation. I beg to move my Resolution.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words, "in the opinion of this House, the freeholders and owners of ground values in the Metropolis ought to contribute directly a substantial share of Local Taxation,"—(*Mr. James Stuart,*) —instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(6.20.) MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I rise to second the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Shoreditch. I do so in the interests of the working classes and very poor of the Metropolis, a vast number of whom live in the Tower Hamlets, of which I am one of the Representatives. I believe that those classes suffer unjustly through the incidence of local taxation, and that the owners of ground values in London escape unfairly from taking their proper share of local burdens. My experience of nearly 40 years in East London convinces me that personal efforts and private benevolence

can do very little to ameliorate the condition of the labouring classes; whereas the Government could do much in that direction by distributing local taxation fairly between the freeholders and occupiers. Whitechapel may serve as an illustration of the injustice imposed upon occupiers by the present system. The interests of my constituency differ only in degree from those of other working class districts in London. The residents consist to a great extent of the labouring classes and of small tradesmen; therefore, the heavy burden of local taxation constitutes a larger proportion of their total expenditure than the average of London as a whole. There are few highly-rented premises in the district, because the houses are as a rule of the plainest construction, yet owing to the increased value of the land, rents are very high in proportion to the accommodation afforded. I believe a better house can be obtained for the same rent, say £50 or £60 a year, in any other district excepting the City or the fashionable parts of the West End. My constituency comprises some of the very poorest and densely populated localities in England; therefore, the high rents and heavy rates are of vital importance. A 1d. rate produces now only £1,600, consequently the total proportion of rates to rent is nearly 6s. in the £1 as against the average of 5s. if London were rated as a whole. Whitechapel suffers in full measure through the absence of landlords. I doubt if a dozen freeholders actually live in the district. Is it not reasonable, therefore, that these absentee landlords, who derive large and increasing incomes from the district, should be forced to bear a fair share of local burdens? Hon. Members are no doubt aware of the great increase in the price of land in the City, where within the last 20 or 30 years ground values have doubled and trebled. I will not trouble the House with many statistics, but will mention two or three instances within my own knowledge. A house in Cornhill was rack-rented 35 years ago at £350; the ground is now let at £900. In Broad Street 30 years ago several small houses were rack-rented at £200; now the ground of each brings in £550. These are by no means extreme cases. I will, however, give a more remarkable instance from information supplied by the estate agent concerned. A house in Cornhill was, up till 1862, let at the rack-rent of £150—equal to a value of, say, £3,000. The freehold in possession was sold at public auction in June 1862 for £11,000—nearly four times the value it would have realised when let in 1841 on a 21 years' lease. Twenty years later, in May 1882, it was again sold at public auction for £25,000—more than eight times the value, in about 40 years. That may have been an extreme case; but it was not an exceptional price, as the adjoining house, of similar size, is built on a ground rent of £1,100. But land has not risen in value only in the City, where wealth abounds, but also at the other extreme, where the direst poverty prevails. There is a piece of land, about four acres in extent, close to Commercial Street. The inhabitants who live on it are largely composed of the very dregs of social life. It is rightly stigmatised by the Rev. S. A. Barnett, Vicar of St. Judas, as the plague spot of Whitechapel. When the Whitechapel murders began, one of which was perpetrated on that very property, the concentration of police dispersed, to some extent, the criminal classes who lived there. The leaseholders of some common lodging houses could not, in consequence, get lodgers so as to pay their rent; they wished to cancel their leases; and, therefore, the freeholder was inclined to sell out. That was considered a good opportunity to buy the land, pull down the wretched houses, which were inhabited by prostitutes and other vicious classes, and utilise the ground, not for profit, but for artisans' dwellings and other useful purposes. Mr. Barnett formed a syndicate of eleven gentlemen, including two Members of this House, each to furnish £4,000. The income of the property was £1,800, and as much as 25 years' purchase, namely, £45,000, was offered, but the scare passed away, and the landlord preferred to retain his loathsome but increasing income. The Home Secretary, I think, knows something about that plague spot, and I rather think that he would not object to see that freeholder taxed for local purposes. All, I think, will admit that the owners of ground values in London are a favoured class; they enjoy the immunity all freehold property enjoys from the full taxation applied to personalty, while they have the benefit of vast expenditure on improvements. In no other instance has property risen in value so generally and so greatly. I am, therefore, surprised that a class so able to bear increased taxation should have hitherto escaped. I am surprised that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not created a special tax for these ground rents, to tap this source of revenue.

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): Which? Ground rents or ground values?

*MR. MONTAGU: I would prefer ground values; but ground rents would be better than nothing. An objection has been raised to the rating of ground values on the plea that those who have purchased ground rents recently have not the benefit from improvements, and their investments have not increased in value. The reply to that would be that the intention to tax ground rents or ground values has been publicly declared on behalf of a large section of this House, and, therefore, purchasers have had ample notice that such would be the effect of legislation in the near future. Whenever a fresh tax is imposed, some cases, of unequal treatment will arise, but the owners of ground values as a class cannot reasonably object to a moderate tax. In my native town—Liverpool—city lands have been the object of greater regard and foresight than here in London. It appears that the Corporation has owned for many years nearly two-thirds of the parish of Liverpool. The leases granted by the Corporation, of which there are over 5,000, are as a rule sold for 75 years at a peppercorn rent renewal during the term by fines, in consideration of which payment the leases are extended to 75 years. Thus, private landowners are to a great extent excluded from the benefit of unearned increment, and from benefit arising from the expenditure of public money on improvements, all this goes to the ratepayers. Also, if any property is required for public purposes and improvements it can be more easily acquired by such a system. The leaseholders, too, erect more substantial buildings than they do in London. Two years ago and last year I introduced a Bill into the House for the special rating of ground values in London on account of permanent Metropolitan improvements. I have not re-introduced that Bill this Session out of deference to the wish of those who thought it preferable to raise the money by a special Death Duty upon ground values. I will not trouble the House with any details of that Bill, but I may be allowed to read the Memorandum which explained my object—

> "The object of this Bill is to charge, as in the case of a sewers rate, upon the freehold or inheritance of the land within the Metropolis, the capital sums now due, or hereafter to become due, in respect of loans raised, or hereafter to be raised, with the previous sanction of the Treasury or of the Local Government Board, after full investigation as to the class and nature of the work, and exclusively applied to carrying out permanent improvements."

The Select Committee on Metropolitan Local Government (1866) reported—

> "That nearly the whole of its (the late Metropolitan Board of Works) expenditure and obligations have been incurred for the purpose of supplying wants arising from the defects of former administration of the affairs of the Metropolis, and of effecting permanent improvements, which have tended to increase the value of property in the Metropolis."

They conclude—

> "Your Committee, therefore, recommend that in any arrangement of the fundamental resources of the Metropolitan Board, a portion of the charge for permanent improvements and works shall be borne by the owners of property within the Metropolis, the rate being in the first instance paid by the occupier, and subsequently deducted from his rent, as is now provided in regard to the General Property Tax."

Then the Memorandum proceeds—

> "The machinery by which it is proposed to give effect to this principle of local taxation is to take out of the amounts raised by any Rating Authority in the Metropolis such sum now included therein as represents borrowed capital or annual instalments for its repayment, and to substitute in lieu thereof a Metropolitan improvement rate, to be collected as a fixed charge from the occupier, as in the case of Land Tax. The occupier paying the same shall be entitled to deduct the amount from any rent payable by him to his superior in title, and each successive owner of any interest less than the fee simple shall have this power. All contracts whereby this rate is shifted upon the occupier or the owner of intermediate interest, are declared null and void."

This was the explanation of the Bill which, for the reason I have stated, I have not reintroduced this year. In any case there is no doubt that the ground landlords in London do not contribute sufficiently to local burdens. There are several causes which tend continually to appreciate the value of land in London, benefiting that specially favoured class, the ground landlords of this great city. There is the fact that in the capital of this prosperous country, land which is limited in extent is in the hands of a few and must increase in value. There is also the fact that the value is enhanced by the great mass of capital seeking sound investment, owing to the reduction of the interest on consols and the consequent reduction in the interest on many Foreign loans largely held by our capitalists. These are, perhaps, spontaneous causes, but there is also what is called the unearned increment arising from the industry of the tenant. This benefit to the freeholder arises frequently from the concentration of a large portion of the property of a locality in the possession of one owner. The last cause to which I would refer is the benefit which landowners in London derive from the vast expenditure of public money in permanent improvements such as the Main Drainage, the Thames Embankment, the Holborn Viaduct, making new streets, widening old streets, building new bridges and freeing old bridges. It is well known that the Metropolitan debt now amounting to about £35,000,000 was incurred by the Board of Works by loans chiefly for the purpose of permanent improvements. The amount is between £30,000,000 and £40,000,000, I will call it £30,000,000. The interest payable is about £1,000,000 annually, besides which £300,000 a year is raised for a sinking fund to redeem the capital at the end of about 50 years. For whose benefit is this rate for a sinking fund imposed? Not for the occupier for he is not likely to be in possession 50 years hence. It is not for the advantage of the leaseholder, his term will have expired or be about to expire at that time. The benefit will, as a general rule, accrue almost entirely to the freeholder. One can understand that the occupier might be required to pay a part or even the whole of the interest on the money laid out for permanent improvements, for it may be assumed that he enjoys the advantage during the time of his occupation, but how about the sinking fund? Why must he also pay the £300,000 a year for a sinking fund to benefit the freeholder 50 years hence? At that time not only will the rate for the sinking fund cease, but the £1,000,000 for interest will also be wiped out with the repayment of capital. Is it just that this rate for sinking fund should be paid by any one but the freeholder? Rates and taxes are usually levied for current requirements, not for the advantage of a privileged class 50 years hence. The sinking fund is a sentimental provision. I am not finding fault with it, it is very right, but it ought either to be abolished and the repayments made by a fresh loan, or it should be kept up by taxes levied on the class which will ultimately benefit by it. The difficulty of making the ground landlords pay, arises from the fact that contracts exist by which leaseholders assume all liability for rates, except the landlord's property tax. That difficulty might be overcome by imposing a special Property Tax for permanent improvements, and that should be made untransferable. It might be argued that if the tenant is relieved, the landlord would raise the rent. Well, there is some force in that, but it would not be so easy to raise rent on account of a small and variable tax. But in order to prevent any such injustice a special Death Duty on ground values in London might be levied instead of a tax in aid of local taxation, and that Death Duty should be devoted to reducing the rates. I still maintain that it would also be advisable to impose, to a moderate extent, a special landlords' Property Tax, or rate, on ground values in London, an untransferable rate, and the proceeds should be devoted to the payment of the sinking fund rate, the surplus being spent on permanent London improvements. The rateable value of property in London is about £33,000,000, and the ground value is variously estimated from £13,000,000 down to £7,000,000. Take it at £10,000,000. A tax of 1s. in the £1 would produce £500,000, of which £300,000 would be paid into a sinking fund, which it is the absolute duty of the freeholder to provide, and £200,000 would be spent in permanent improvements which would also improve the ground values. With this balance in their hands the County Council could carry out improvements in the East of London which certainly have long been needed. The Bell Lane area was condemned 10 or 12 years ago, but the improvement has not been undertaken on account of the great expenditure involved. Then there is the Blackwall Tunnel to be paid for, and, possibly, another tunnel under the Thames at Shadwell. One difficulty in the levying of Property Tax or ground values was provided for in my Bill. For the rare cases where the tax on ground values amounted to a quarter of the rent receivable, the amount of tax would be accumulated at 3 per cent. compound interest until the reversion should fall in. I trust that hon. Members on both sides of the House will admit that occupiers in London pay more than their fair proportion of local taxation; that in the words of the Resolution—

> "Freeholders and owners of ground values in the Metropolis ought to contribute directly a substantial share of local taxation."

At least, the annual payment for the redemption of Metropolitan debt ought to be paid by the freeholders; also, they should contribute towards future permanent improvements in London; and whether the money be raised from the owners of ground values in London by a special Death Duty, by a special Property Tax, or in any other way, I hope the Resolution which I have the honour to second will be carried to-night.

*(6.45.) MR. G. W. BALFOUR (Leeds, Central): I am rather surprised that my hon. Friend the Member for Hoxton, after the suggestion you, Sir, made for the benefit of the House, should, notwithstanding, have thought it right to persevere with his Resolution. But I shall be still more surprised if he carries a majority with him into the Lobby. I have placed on the Paper an Amendment founded on the view which you have expressed; and I venture to think that view is not only in accordance with the usual practice of this House, but is also in accordance with the obvious dictates of convenience and propriety. It is not the practice of the House, nor is it desirable, that we should pass judgment upon a question pending the deliberations of a Committee appointed to consider it. Least of all should this be done in the case of a question so difficult as that on which we are now asked to pronounce a decision. The hon. Member for St. Pancras (Mr. Lawson) has quoted two precedents in reference to the present position. I cannot think that either of these precedents affords a good example, but, rather, an example to be carefully avoided. The hon. Member made the further statement on which I cannot speak with personal knowledge, that the Committee have taken their evidence on the subject.

*MR. LAWSON: For London only.

*MR. G. W. BALFOUR: I have been assured that the evidence taken was all from one side, and, so far from this being an argument in favour of this Resolution, a strong reason is afforded in the other direction. I do not think that under the circumstances it is essential that I should endeavour to refute the arguments the hon. Member for Hoxton has brought forward. It will be sufficient if I can show to the House that his Motion is premature—I mean in the sense that it asks the House to come to a judgment on this matter before the House is prepared to come to a judgment. I submit that in appointing this Committee only two days ago the House has clearly shown that in its opinion more light is required to be thrown upon the subject before it can express a decision. Nevertheless, it may be proper and convenient that I should follow the line of argument adopted by my hon. Friend the Mover of this Resolution. The Resolution raises questions not only of the very greatest importance but, as everybody will admit who listened to the speech of the hon. Member, questions of the greatest difficulty. I gladly recognise the ability which marked that speech and the moderation of its tone, but the hon. Member made a good many observations in the course of it which I do not say I differ from, because, being a member of the Committee, I do not wish to express a definite opinion, but observations, upon the accuracy of which there exists much difference of opinion. First let me observe, the actual terms of the Motion refer to the Metropolis alone. The Preamble to the Motion, however, has no such limited application—it is general in its terms—

> "To call attention to the unfair incidence of local taxation in London and other large towns."

and then the Motion goes on to declare—

> "That the freeholders and owners of ground values in the Metropolis ought to contribute directly a substantial share of local taxation."

If we examine the reasons given by the hon. Member for treating London apart from other towns I cannot altogether admit that they are beyond criticism. The first reason adduced is the great size of London and the enormous amount of its local taxation. Another reason the hon. Member gave was that London was badly treated in this matter, inasmuch as relief given to ratepayers in London had been less than that given in other parts of the country. Well; it does not appear to me that either of these considerations have very much to do with the question before us. No doubt, if we are to assume that the hon. Member is right in his contention that the present incidence of taxation is unfair, then of course they might constitute a reason for taking London before any other town. But this begs the question at issue before us. The third reason is more closely connected with the substance of the Motion, namely, the allegation that the public debt of London is not only very large but has been largely incurred for permanent improvements. Here we do come more or less to the heart of the subject, for no doubt the discussion must centre to a considerable extent around the question of permanent improvements. The hon. Member went on to say that permanent improvements are all provided for out of rates paid by the occupiers. I think, however, in a later period of his speech, he somewhat modified this, for he admitted that in many cases the rates are not paid by the occupiers. Then he went on to put the very pertinent question, "Who pays the rates?" I think it would have been of some advantage had he gone more closely into this question — Who pays the rates? Is it the occupier or the owner? Our final decision must turn very much upon the answer given to that question. It is one of the most difficult questions in the whole range of political economy. There was a discussion in the House the other day on the taxation of land, in the course of which the right hon Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, taking hold of an admission made by the President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Chaplin), that in his view all rates ultimately fall upon the landlord, treated it as an acknowledgment that the subventions from the Exchequer in relief of local taxation must be for the benefit of the landlords alone. That is, no doubt, a possible view to take; but if you take that view you must not at the same time complain of rates being entirely thrown upon the occupier. I offer no opinion upon the subject: it is an extremely difficult one, and I cannot say that I have made up my mind as to what is the real incidence of taxation applied to urban property. But I think it is admitted that ground rents pay their proportion of local burdens, that is to say, if you divide the rack rent into two parts, and assign part to the ground rent and part to the rent of the structure, the share of taxation which falls on the part representing the ground is paid by the landlord. Many economists go beyond this and say that the whole eventually falls upon the landowner; and if I understand the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, he is rather inclined to that view. I admit that if there is ground for the contention of the Mover and Seconder of this Resolution it is in connection with permanent improvements. The hon. Member for Hoxton has told us that the unearned increment arises largely from the improvements paid for out of rates, and that the whole of it falls to the ground landlord. This last statement he again somewhat qualified later on and rightly qualified, by adding that until the lease falls out a large portion of the benefit does come to the occupier or building owner as the case may be. Now is it true that a large part of the unearned increment comes from payments out of the rates? This is an important question to raise and to answer, and I wish the hon. Member who moved the Resolution had gone a little more closely into that question. His argument was this: house property in London has enormously risen in value, to the extent, I think he said, of an annual increase in assessment of £300,000. This increase, he assumed, was owing to the increase in value caused by public improvements. The rise in value may be in part due to expenditure out of the rates; how much is a difficult point to determine, but I am rather inclined to think the increase in value is, for the most part, due not so much to the expenditure of the ratepayers' money as to the natural growth of the town, the increase of population, and demand for house accommodation, with the natural result that ground rents go up, and would go up if there were not these permanent improvements. A large portion, I may say much the largest portion, of the expenditure of the rates is not upon permanent improvements, but upon the wants of the current year. As to what the proportion between expenditure for permanent improvements and for yearly wants is, it is the business of the Committee to discover, if possible. So far as the interest on loans contracted for permanent improvements is concerned, I do not, myself, see that it is easy to make out that any unfairness exists. I admit it is otherwise with the sinking fund, and there I think there is a benefit accruing to the owner to which he does not contribute in any form. So far as the sinking fund upon these loans is concerned, there is, I admit, a good deal to be said in favour of the contention of the Mover and Seconder of the Resolution for a just redistribution of the burden. At the same time, before adopting any redistribution we have to consider whether a new plan will not create more unfairness than exists under the present system. I do not say whether it is possible to find a plan that will not do this. The hon. Member for Hoxton himself confesses that absolute justice is not to be expected; but unless we can see our way to a method that offers a greater approximation to justice we may well doubt the expediency of making any alteration at all. The hon. Member has mentioned a variety of ways in which the inequality or injustice of which he speaks might be remedied, but I did not gather that he expressed a decided preference. There was the proposal made by Mr. Moulton, a former Member of this House, of which I need only say that the hon. Member himself rejected it.

Mr. J. STUART: I said I did not view it as anything like a complete solution.

*Mr. G. W. BALFOUR: I accept the hon. Member's correction. I do not understand whether any of the proposals he mentioned offer, in his view, anything like a complete solution. I will only observe that there seems to be a great variety of nostrums to deal with the situation—I will not call them nostrums, that may seem an offensive term prejudging the question; but the very variety of the remedies proposed forms an additional and strong reason why we should not now come to a decision, and why we should leave the Committee to their deliberations. The hon. Gentleman said this proposal was made in the interest of the poor. I have not the least doubt he was perfectly sincere in saying so; but many think the people who would gain from the change would not be the poor—certainly not occupiers on short tenancies—but the building owner or middleman of some kind or other. Here, again, I say this is a point on which we require further information. I have in the remarks I have made avoided expressing an opinion of my own, partly because I am a Member of the Committee and partly because I think the House ought to reject the Motion quite independently of the wisdom or error of the views it expresses. But I would remind the House of the extreme difficulty and complexity of the various matters which must be taken into consideration before we can arrive at a final judgment with regard to this question. First of all, we must consider whether ground rents have already paid rates, and, if so, what proportion of the rates? Next we must consider what are the interests usually concerned in house property in London, what part they respectively bear in contributing to rates, and what benefit each of them obtains from the expenditure of the rates. For instance, it has been brought to common knowledge by the inquiries of the Committee, that in London almost all house property involves three interests—that of the occupier, that of the building owner, and that of the ground landlord. Before we can determine the question of the rating of ground rents and ground values we must ascertain what is the relation between the freeholder and the building owner, and then what is the relation between the building owner and the occupier with regard to the payment of rates and the benefit received from expenditure of rates. I can hardly conceive any inquiry more difficult and more complicated than that, and yet it is one which must be undertaken before we can give any satisfactory answer to the question which has been propounded. Having obtained accurate information with regard to these preliminary matters, we should next have to estimate the value of the reasons that have been adduced in favour of a change. Supposing we arrvied at the conclusion that it is desirable that the proposal of the hon. Member should be adopted, we should have further to consider how far the position is modified in cases where there are existing contracts in force. I was glad to gather from the remarks of the hon. Member for Hoxton that he thought that in cases where contracts are in existence new burdens should not be thrown upon the landlords which are not imposed upon them by the terms of those contracts.

Mr. J. STUART: It depends upon the date of the contract.

*Mr. G. W. BALFOUR: The hon. Member, at all events, admits that the existence of contracts makes a difference which must be taken account of. Then, again, if a change in the present system is contemplated, we have to consider what system to adopt in its place, and in doing so we shall have to exercise the utmost caution, otherwise it may happen that the supposed remedy will merely aggravate the evil it is intended to remove. Lastly, if we come to the conclusion that no substantial injustice is done by the present system, and no change is required on that account, we have to consider whether increased values of grount-rents, and vacant building-land are not proper objects for the imposition of a completely new tax. But this involves an inquiry more difficult even than any of the preceding, for it raises the question of the general principle of taxation in this country, and of substituting taxation on capital value for taxation on income. All these questions are under the consideration of the Committee that is now sitting to inquire into the subject. In these circumstances, I repeat it would be not only against the general tradition of the House but against the dictates of common sense, for us to vote for the Resolution before us without waiting for the Report of that Committee. For these reasons I shall vote against the Motion of the hon. Member opposite.

*(7.7.) Mr. WHITMORE (Chelsea): Had it been possible to move the suggested Amendment, I should have desired to second it. I have no wish to hang up this important question, and I do not deny that the present incidence of rates in London is a matter of the greatest interest to the population of London; but I say that when the House comes to legislate upon the question it ought to do so with authentic information before it, and after it has received the practical suggestions of the Select Committee in a form rather more distinct than have been the suggestions brought forward to-day by the hon. Member for Hoxton. In the meantime, I must say I hope that when the Committee inquires into this subject it will take a large view of the question of local rates. In former years, local rates were levied for a very limited number of local objects, and the burden was imposed entirely on realty. But gradually a vast quantity of objects have been brought into the area to which local rates are made to apply. All the tendencies of the time are in the direction of increasing the number of public objects on which local rates will be levied. In the last 10 years how many new public buildings have been erected, new open spaces laid out, new free libraries built, new baths and washhouses opened? All these are public objects, the utility of which I should be the last to dispute. Every sign seems to show that year after year more money will be spent on sanitary, educational, and architectural objects. I welcome that state of things. In the future the use of corporate machinery and agencies for the common good of local districts will add largely to the comfort and prosperity of the community; but I do say that in the future it will be impossible to keep the whole of the ever-increasing consequent burden on the shoulders of the owners and occupiers of land. It is impossible to distinguish in their nature between local public objects and those more national objects for which Imperial taxation is

levied, and for these latter purposes the burden falls not only on realty, but also on personalty. I imagine that one of the first duties of the Committee should be to inquire whether it would not be possible to put some part of the burden of local rates on the subject-matter of personal property. I maintain that that could be done, although, perhaps, not directly. If something is not done in that direction, and if the owners of personalty are not brought into the net of local rating so as to make an appreciable addition to the local funds, there will be a reaction and revolt on the part of the present ratepayers. I am anxious that the ratepayers of London should not find their burdens intolerable, and should not, in their impatience, get up an agitation against the useful public works which are being carried out at the expense of the rates. When I saw the hon. Member's Motion on the Paper, and considered the quarter from which it emanated, I could not help feeling that it was part of the general scheme of policy by which it is sought more or less to penalise the individual ownership of land in the country; and as I am one of those who think it should be one of our prime objects in public affairs nowadays to increase the number of freeholds both in town and country I am anxious to oppose the Motion, which seems to me to give currency to a mischievous idea, that you ought so far to penalise land ownership as to make it intolerable. I believe myself that the real remedy for the present, as I admit heavy and possibly unfair, incidence of local rates in London is to be sought rather in the direction I have referred to than in the vague and inadequate proposals before the House. Therefore, I shall oppose the Motion.

*(7.12.) MR. LAWSON: The hon. Member for Leeds is unable, by the Forms of the House, to move the Amendment he has placed upon the Paper. But he did his best to interpret its sense, and it seems to me rather curious that time after time, when Resolutions in favour of reform are brought forward, it is thought wise to meet them, not with a direct negative but with a dilatory Motion, such as the Amendment which the hon. Member opposite has placed upon the Paper, but which the Forms of the House prevent him from moving. This subject has been hung up for more than 30 years. It is 20 years since the present Chancellor of the Exchequer presented the ablest Report on local taxation that the House has ever had to consider; and I think I can relieve the mind of the hon. Member for Leeds of his scruples in regard to discussing this Motion while the Committee upstairs is sitting. I am sure we all feel sorry that through ill health the hon. Member was unable to take part in the deliberations of the Committee last year, but I can assure him that so far as London is concerned we have obtained all the information it is possible to obtain. For four years we have had a long procession of surveyors and landlords, agents before us who one and all have declared against the principle of the Motion of the hon. Member for Hoxton. What the Committee want is light and guidance from this House in the direction in which they should frame their Report. This subject, as every one admits, is one of immense complexity, and it will be of great assistance if we know whether the House is of the same mind as it was in 1886, when, on the Motion of the late Professor Rogers, it passed the Resolution which it is asked to affirm now. The truth is, this is not a mere fiscal matter; it is a social and humane question. I was glad to listen to the Member for Chelsea. He stated what I want to emphasise, namely, that we have arrived in London at a deadlock of ways and means. Objects of municipal utility have increased, and are increasing, and money must be found, yet the ratepayer is already driven to the last point of exasperation under the present unfair system. He will not consent to guarantee these loans which are absolutely necessary if you are to meet the growing needs of the Metropolis, and to pay for the immense arrears of government or mis-government from which we suffer in a different degree to the inhabitants of any other City. I believe myself that on this question depends the health, beauty and, if I may say so, the liveableness of the Metropolis. You cannot expect that the occupiers and lessees will be content to pay back within short periods of time the vast sums of public money which ought to be spent on these improvements of which, up to the present, we have had

a very small instalment. I have no doubt that you will see a reaction even against the small enterprises in the direction of improvements of the London County Council. The ratepayers will say that they want economy. Prophets will go before them prophesying smooth things, but I am afraid the inevitable result will confute those prophesies as in the case of the School Board. You will increase the rating and the debt, and yet you will be unable to do what is absolutely necessary to extend the system of improvement which was inaugurated by the Metropolitan Board of Works early in the 70's to other parts of London, which at this moment are almost untouched. There is a very great difference, indeed, between the Metropolis and other towns. I do not mean to say that there are not other centres of population where the burdens of rating press very heavily on the community, but the House should recollect that the new era of municipal movement began later in London than it did elsewhere. Municipal boroughs obtained their reformed Corporations in 1835; before 1855 there was no government in London worthy of the name outside the City. There was a network of Paving Boards Vestries which did not even meet the every-day necessities of local life. Besides this, you have in London a system of tenure—a system of short leases—which emphasises every evil to be found in connection with the incidence of local taxation, and which creates the spirit of which the Chancellor of the Exchequer complained in such strong terms in the statement in which he conceded everything I have ever proposed in this House or out of it for the reform of local taxation. The necessities of London are peculiar. Where else is there the prospect of having to spend probably £2,500,000 in the next three or four years in absolutely transforming the present system of sewage disposal? Well, of course, every owner of property in London is every bit as much interested in that as those who, for the time being, occupy the houses. You have in London an increase in local expenditure, debt, and rateable value such as you have nowhere else. Between the first quinquennial valuation of London in 1871 and that of 1886 there was an increase of £11,000,000 of valuation, or over 45 per cent. From 1870 to 1886 the gross valuation increased from £22,140,000 to £37,027,000, and whereas the rate under the Metropolitan Board of Works in 1856 was a fraction over 2d. in the £1, that of the London County Council in 1890 was nearly 14d. In 10 years—that is to say, from 1878 to 1888—the Metropolitan rates increased by one-third, whereas the increase in the rates of the great municipal boroughs was only by one-fifth. Altogether, since the Metropolitan Board of Works was established, we have spent upwards of £11,000,000 on 33 schemes of improvement, mostly dealing with streets and a few with artizans' dwellings; but those improvements have only affected a very small part of the West End of the Metropolis, and it is equally necessary to pierce the squalor of the slums in other quarters. To do that it is essential to find some new sources of revenue. On the Continent the beauty and convenience of cities is added to by the proceeds of the *Octroi*, the local import duties, as in Paris; but we have nothing of that kind in London, and have to look to other sources of income. London is mapped out into large and small estates, and the freeholder is taking increased values and is looking forward to large reversions, while the class which have least to gain are paying for the improvements. The freeholder benefits by the permanent and temporary improvements carried out in London; and while no one would ask that he should pay more than his due, do not let him escape altogether, and do not allow the cost of all the improvements to be borne by those who have least to gain by them. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will remember very well the appointment of the first Select Committee on London Taxation in 1866. That Committee was presided over by Mr. Ayrton. Its Report has been quoted; but I should like to draw attention to one reason it gave for recommending a division of rates. The Committee said—

> "Having regard to the progressively increasing charge on the Metropolis for the general purposes of the Board, and to the growing demands of the community for every kind of improvement, not merely to correct all the defects and neglects of centuries in the management of local affairs, but to satisfy the requirements of a daily increasing desire for greater convenience and even adornment of the Metro-

> polis, your Committee are of opinion that the time has arrived when it is necessary to deal with the subject in a comprehensive and permanent manner."

When the rateable value was £15,000,000 the debt was only £3,500,000, but the debt is now £39,500,000. The recommendations of that Committee, therefore, have fallen through. But then you come to what is the greatest guide in all matters of local taxation, namely, the Report of the Committee over which the Chancellor of the Exchequer presided, and the statement he laid on the Table of the House. In his draft Report in 1870 he said—

> "When the owner and occupier have entered into an agreement to pay all rates for a definite period, it is, of course, indisputable that the excess of rates falls exclusively upon the occupier."

He said that three evils sprang up—

> "(1) Two different sets of persons believe they are paying. (2) A sense of injustice has sprung up in consequence of a portion of those local taxes being devoted to permanent improvements by which the owner who does not pay gains as much as the occupier who does pay. (3) Disadvantage of exemption from administrative point of view. It can scarcely be overlooked that the result of the present law has been to impose many charges upon the occupier, which neither he nor the owner foresaw when they entered into the bargain."

That is obvious to everybody who studies the question. No occupier contracting with the Metropolitan Board of Works would imagine that he would have to pay for the establishment of the Metropolitan Fire Brigade, for creating open spaces, and for the better housing of the working classes. He could not have anticipated the 1s. School Rate. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the Report of 1871, said—

> "Since 1839 £6,500,000 of new taxation have been imposed for new purposes. No one can deny that real property bears an amount falling far short of the whole, the balance being part from the profits of the tenant farmer and by the occupiers of houses, or, as I have elsewhere styled them, the consumers of a commodity called a house, a commodity which I frankly admitted to be very heavily taxed. The result of the present state of things has been that many great improvements in the Metropolis, in Liverpool, in Manchester, and other large towns have been much within the last 10 years exclusively at the cost of the occupier without the landlords contributing a single shilling towards the expense."

All this has become much worse since the right hon. Gentleman spoke. We know that the right hon. Gentleman was prevented by circumstances from carrying his views into the legislative proposals of the next year; but I now ask the right hon. Gentleman to come over and help us. We are face to face with the greatest evils in connection with London government; we have appeals from every quarter for better provision for the housing of the people, for more playgrounds and open spaces for recreative purposes, and to nearly all these appeals we can only respond that we recognise the utility and advantage of these things; but we are unable to do what is asked without adding largely to the rates by borrowing money to be repaid at short periods by those who had merely a temporary interest in their houses. I do not believe it would be possible to meet the difficulty entirely by a re-adjustment of rates; but these objects of utility are multiplying every day, and it is unfair we should pay rates for new purposes which we could not and did not anticipate at the time we entered into the contracts. I quite see the illusive nature of the reform known as the division of rates. That would not meet the whole case, because where the district is crowded, and the values are rising, the landlord is able to shift the burden upon the tenant, and where we have got into arrear in the municipal expenditure required for different objects of public necessity, the demand for which is increasing every day, this tendency is more apparent. The hon. Member for Shoreditch has made one suggestion which seems to me to strike at the very root of the whole question. He says you will have to provide new funds, and you had better do it by means of a local Death Duty. The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer has already shown us the way to do this. The right hon. Gentleman allotted some of the Probate Duty to local purposes, thus conceding the principle for which we contend, namely, that those who live in a locality should contribute, as property passes from generation to generation, to the funds for local purposes. Sir Thomas Farrar gave evidence to a Committee upstairs in support of this principle, and as the hon. Member for Leeds may not have read that evidence, I will quote from what Sir T. Farrar said. He said—

"I would suggest that the fund from which to help the ratepayers should be a proportion of the Death Duties on local and visible property. From the Exchequer contribution London at present receives £823,000 a year, about one-half of which comes from licences, and one-half from probate. The rateable value is now £31,700,000. Let us assume it to be £30,000,000 and to be worth 25 years' purchase. The capital value would be £750,000,000. According to the best information I can get from the Inland Revenue the average length of life of an owner of London property may be put at about 25 years. If so, the £750,000,000 will change ownership by death every 25 years, and there will fall to be taxed by Death Duties every year £30,000,000. Three per cent. on this would give £900,000."

I do not think that this would be very hard measure for the owners of real property in London. Does the Chancellor of the Exchequer know that 60 per cent. of the houses built and occupied, will have fallen into reversion after half the present debt of London has been paid off, and that something over 15 per cent. will have fallen in after the whole debt of London has been paid off? Therefore, the unexhausted value of the expenditure will go into the pockets of those who then enter into possession of the lands or houses. It is not, therefore, a hard thing to ask that the owners of real property should pay, as it passes from generation to generation, some portion of the unearned increment towards local purposes. The hon. Member for Chelsea is in favour of local taxation on personalty. He must know, however, that there is enormous difficulty in localising pesonalty; and that in the United States where all personalty is assessed for local purposes, all sorts of jugglery goes on. Rich men living in one place are taxed in another because of their unwillingness to pay on the full value of their money and shares. You can get at their shares, but you cannot get at the debenture bonds they hold. Consequently there is immense difficulty in taxing personalty for local purposes. I do not decry the idea, but I say there is a far easier way of raising municipal revenue, and I beg to urge upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer that he shall extend the principle he adopted in 1888 by causing local contributions to be raised from the Death Duties to enable the Municipal Authorities to carry out the great work of improvement in their several localities. I have already quoted many figures, and I do not wish to weary the House by adducing more, but I do think the time has come when the House should realise the position in which we in London find ourselves with our £40,000,000 debt, the greater part of which falls to the share of the London County Council and the rest to the City of London and the different local bodies. All, or nearly all, this money has been borrowed for purposes of permanent improvements, and I do not believe the existing body of ratepayers will allow us to contract any further debt. There is at the present moment great outcry as to the pressure of the rates, which are increasing every year. At the time the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. Fowler) was in office the average rate for the Metropolis was 4s. 6d. in the £1. It is now 5s. 3d., but even this does not put the case in its worst light, because it is unfortunately the fact that the rates are lightest in the richest parts of the Metropolis and heaviest in the poorest parts. In the East End and most of the poor districts the rate is over 6s. in the £1, and those are the parts of London which stand most in need of amelioration, because hardly anything was done by the Board of Works or has since been done by the County Council for their benefit. I do not look upon this question as merely one of readjustment. Probably those who suffer most are the small shopkeepers, though I fancy that the artisans pay, in the rents of their tenements, much more than their fair proportion of the general rate. But you have also to recognise this: that you cannot make life better worth living in the destitute quarters of the Metropolis unless you can tap new sources of municipal revenue. I hope the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer will be able to offer us some hope in this direction to-night. We are very anxious to deal with the great questions of social reform which lie before us, the gravity of which increases year by year, and, to my mind, the whole future of London government depends on a satisfactory solution of this problem.

(7.10.) Mr. J. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I admit there is some force in the Amendment of the hon. Gentleman opposite; that it is difficult to discuss this matter with any great amount of interest with the knowledge that the Committee is sitting upstairs to consider the whole question. Still the question is so large and important that it is not undesirable that the Committee should have some idea of the opinions prevailing in this House upon it. Therefore, with due deference to the observations that have fallen from you, Sir, I cannot help thinking that the discussion to-night will not be unprofitable if it only elicits from hon. Gentlemen, and especially from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, some expressions of opinion or suggestions, especially with reference to the particular proposal of the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart). The question is one which involves not merely that of local taxation, but it also includes important matters of public policy. It is difficult to discuss it without regard to the much larger question of the readjustment of taxation as between Imperial or national and local taxation. I believe the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) has said that a due readjustment of Imperial and local taxation would be the work of an entire Session. The question is one of great difficulty. In fact, the principles upon which Imperial and local taxation are levied are very difficult to explain at the present time. Doubtless the Chancellor of the Exchequer will admit that it would be very difficult logically to defend all that now exists as underlying the principles of Imperial and local taxation. We have tried to remedy the difficulties, and from time to time the Government have made certain subventions in aid of local rates, it being found that a great many public charges which ought to be borne by the national funds, have been thrown on the local rates and on a particular class of property. There are many National duties performed to the present time which are paid for by local rates, while other duties of a local character are paid for out of the national taxation. Attempts have been made to remedy the grievance in many ways. We have had grants in aid of local taxation, and also a readjustment as between Local Bodies by the creation of common funds like the Common Poor Fund of London, with a view of readjusting the inequalities existing between the taxation of those who contribute to the local burdens. The result has been a nearer approximation towards a certain amount of fairness in the incidence of local taxation. I cannot help expressing the gratitude which I, and I believe the public generally who are interested in local taxation, feel for what has been done by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It is incorrect to say that the grants made from the Probate Duty and the Licensing Duty have not very largely relieved local taxation. On the contrary that taxation has been materially alleviated by the policy of the right hon. Gentleman. This I am bound to admit in common honesty and candour. I have never had very much sympathy with the strict doctriniare opinions that have been expressed as to the impolicy and injustice of the subventions which have been granted from taxation on personal property towards relief of the burdens on houses and land; and inasmuch as I believe it is necessary to propose further relief, I do not see any source to which we can look except those which have been indicated by some of the preceding speakers. It is generally admitted that local taxation falls heavily on a class of persons, and also on a class of property, less able to bear its burdens than other classes of persons and property. I do not know any class less able to bear either local or Imperial taxation, especially in London, than the small occupiers and small tradesmen upon whom the burden falls very heavily. The shopkeeping class throughout London are obliged, by the necessities of their business, to occupy premises which are highly rated, in order successfully to carry on their several callings, and upon them the poor's rate, and all the other rates, fall with crushing effect. All these people desire alleviation from the undue pressure of local taxation. It has been said by an hon. Member opposite that the present system is one which does substantial justice. I do not think anyone who has given careful attention to this question will admit that that is so. On the contrary, the fact that a large amount of property in London of enormous and increasing value should largely escape the burdens of local taxation seems to me to be a monstrous injustice. In the constituency I have the honour to represent there is a large area of land recently purchased for the purposes of a public park. That land has been for many years let at a very low rental and has been used as pasture land for dairy purposes, having been kept in hand by the owners successively, so that although it has contributed only a small amount towards the public burdens, it has risen, with the progress of the Metropolis, enormously in value. Probably at the commencement of this century £100 per acre was the full value of that land. But when it was recently acquired for a park the public had to pay £1,000 an acre for it. In the meantime, although the owner has contributed very little towards local taxation that taxation has vastly improved, not only the surrounding neighbourhood, but his particular property especially; nevertheless, towards the roads, sewers, and other public works effected in that district this property has scarcely paid anything. It can hardly be said that this is justice. We do not say that there should be confiscation, but we do say that there should be a taxation of the income accruing on property like this which should reach all who are receiving that income. We also say there ought to be a system that will get at the unearned increment of the capital value of the land. I know that the difficulties are very considerable, and, having given much thought to the subject, I am of opinion that the only practicable way by which this unearned value is to be reached is by a Death Duty—whether a special Death Duty or an appropriation of the existing Death Duty is another question. Following up the suggestion of the hon. Member for Shoreditch, I would press on the attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the Succession Duty might be increased to the extent of bringing it to the level of the Probate Duty, and that there should then be an allocation of the half the Succession Duty towards the relief of local burdens. I know that Sir Thomas Farrer has suggested that the Probate Duty is one that ought not to be resorted to for the relief of local taxation—that it is a tax on personalty and on property out of the district, and having no connection with it, and that, therefore, we ought not to resort to it. But I do not at all agree that personal property should escape, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer knows that the only practical way in which you can reach personal property for local taxation is by means of the Probate Duty. I do not agree with those who think that we should give up any portion of that duty. I believe it is only just that we should have allotted to us a portion of the Probate Duty in relief of local burdens. I hold that we ought to have an extension of that principle with regard to the Succession Duty. The Succession Duty has been increased to the level of 1½ per cent. for Imperial purposes, while the Probate Duty is 3 per cent., namely, 1½ per cent. for Imperial purposes, and 1½ per cent. for local purposes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer did not allot to us any portion of the Succession Duty, because it was supposed that real estate was already sufficiently heavily burdened in other directions. The idea was to bring the two duties as near as possible upon a level; but I suggest that real property owes a special duty to the locality in which it is situated, and it would be just and reasonable to put an extra charge upon it for the requirements of its own district. There would be no practical difficulty, I apprehend, in carrying out this suggestion. The officials at Somerset House know where the property is situate. It is all separately valued and distinguished in the accounts rendered on successions, and it would only involve a little re-arrangement of the forms to ensure that the proportion of the succession handed over to the relief of local taxation should be payable out of the property. There would be no difficulty in ascertaining the amount. Unless some system of this kind be adopted, I think we shall not obtain from real estate that fair contribution towards local taxation which the public are entitled to expect. The suggestion has been made that the ordinary rates should be divided between the owner and occupier, and that there might be a graduated demand on each person having an interest in a property. If we had this, and at the same time an increase of the Succession Duty and an allocation of the increase towards the relief of local burdens, we should have in London a very considerable revenue that would enable many public requirements, in the shape of improvements such as are constantly being demanded, to be satisfactorily carried out. I hope there is a disposition on the part of the Chancellor of the Exchequer to consider this question, because in what he has written and in speeches which he has made, not only here, but in the country, some of them before he occupied the position he fills at the present moment, I think I can see an indication that he is prepared to take a broad view of the entire question, and to recognise claims on behalf of the ratepayers such as are now put forward. The Resolution which my hon. Friend has moved simply proposes that this House should express an opinion that the freeholder and the owners of valuable leasehold interests, which he calls "ground values," ought to contribute a substantial share to local taxation. Possibly the words, owners of ground values, are scarcely sufficiently descriptive, because under the leasehold system there are many persons besides freeholders interested in property. As I stated when moving the Second Reading of a Bill a few days ago (the Conveyancing and Law of Property Act Amendment Bill), the principle of which the House affirmed, the interests dependent on leaseholds in London far exceed in value the freehold interest. I believe my hon. Friend when he uses the phrase freeholders and owners of ground values intends to cover all property interests generally: first, the interests of the freeholder, then that of beneficial lessees, and then all other interests connected with the land and houses rated. There would, I admit, be considerable difficulty in dividing the rates as between landlord and tenant in the case of urban property; but I apprehend there would be no difficulty in the country districts. In the case of agricultural tenancies there would be no difficulty whatever; the trouble would arise in the case of property in towns where a system of leases sub-letting prevails. If the owner is to be rated, he will probably ask for representation, and in these days, when we do not approve the principle of plural voting, it would, perhaps, be a rather startling proposition that owners as a class should have a separate and distinct representation in respect of property. That, however, might possibly be met by allowing the owners to vote as well as occupiers, and to vote with occupiers—a large occupier having no greater voice than a small one. After all, these difficulties are not beyond the statesmanship of men like the Chancellor of the Exchequer or of the leaders on either side of the House. I feel that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Leeds is an embarrassing one. It puts my hon. Friend in some difficulty, and he may not, in consequence, think it necessary to divide the House on the question; but if he should divide the House, I shall vote with him to assist the principle of his Motion. The expression of opinion which I hope we shall elicit from the Chancellor of the Exchequer will have considerable interest for the country at large, and I trust he will say we are nearly approaching the time when he will give some additional relief to the already overburdened ratepayers. (8.10.)

*(8.43.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): It is not my intention to discuss the Amendment, although I think it is a very sensible one. Personally I would prefer to meet the Resolution proposed by the hon. Member for Shoreditch (Mr. Stuart) with a direct negative. The matter is rather one of principle than of detail, and therefore, rather one for the House to settle than for consideration by a Select Committee. The Resolution is—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the freeholders and owners of ground values in the Metropolis ought to contribute directly a substantial share of Local Taxation."

I suppose by "owners of ground values" the hon. Member means persons who are interested in the houses of the Metropolis but are neither the freeholders nor the actual occupiers. There are what are called brick and mortar values, but perhaps the hon. Member is not quite so familiar with the various manners in which building property in the Metropolis has been dealt with, and is still being dealt with, as some other hon. Members. Upon one point I think we are all agreed, and that is that rates in the Metropolis have increased and are increasing, while in the opinion of a great many of us they ought to be diminished. The hon. Member for St. Pancras (Mr. Lawson) who generally represents with so much ability the London County Council, drew a most doleful picture of what the result to the Metropolis, and the London County

Council will be unless such a Resolution as that under discussion is passed in the abstract and carried out in the concrete. As I understood the hon. Gentleman, the death rate will increase enormously, there will be no more improvements, and the slums will become more slumy, unless the London County Council are permitted to spend a great deal more money. Then he told us they will not be able to spend more money, because the ratepayers will not allow them to do so; the ratepayers are already overburdened, they will not permit any more rates to be levied, and therefore the County Council will not be able to provide free libraries, higher education, swimming baths, and a number of other things which the people rejoice to have and enjoy, unless they are allowed to pay for them out of some one else's pocket. By the Resolution we are informed that the money is to be found by taxation of ground rents. I think we should more clearly understand whether the proposition is fair or not, if we considered how these ground rents have been created and are being created. What is the case? Someone, by purchase or inheritance, possesses some land in the outskirts of London or elsewhere, which, as the population draws nearer to it, he thinks will be turned into building land. He advertises that he has the land to sell or let for building purposes. Builders look at it, they know there is an increasing demand for houses in the neighbourhood, and they can see that if they can get the land on fair terms they will be able to build houses upon it and let them at rentals which will remunerate them for their outlay. They approach the landlord who may say, "I had to give a long price for the land, and you shall have the freehold for £1,000 an acre, or if you prefer it, I will give you a lease of 99 years, at an almost nominal rent, for £900 an acre." Probably the builder would reply, "I should be glad to pay you £900 an acre for 99 years, for practically a 99 years' lease is as good to me and as saleable in the market as a freehold, but the capital I have is all employed in my business, and I cannot afford to hand it over to you and leave nothing to trade with. Therefore, I should perfer to take a lease at a ground rent, which will adequately represent the interest which you would obtain in the £1,000 if you were to put it in Consols." The landlord would probably ask a little more interest than he could get in Consols, point out that it would not be himself who would get the advantage of any improvements in the neighbourhood, and require the builder to undertake the payment of the rates and taxes. What is there in that bargain with which the State should interfere? What reason is there that the State should alter the bargains made in the past; or say that in the future no such bargains shall be made? It has been said, on the other side, that at the time the bargain was entered into it was not contemplated that the rates should be so high.

*MR. LAWSON: That was the Chancellor of the Exchequer's argument.

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I am neither bound to know all my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer has written, nor am I bound to agree with it. On this side of the House there is plenty of private judgment and liberty of opinion. We do not all tie ourselves to one leader or become Home Rulers, or anything else in a night because a right hon. Gentleman tells us to do so. Therefore, in spite of what the Chancellor of the Exchequer says, I shall venture to hold my own opinion, and to answer the arguments that have been put forward. Possibly the Chancellor of the Exchequer may not hold the same opinion now. It is said that at the time the bargain was made it was not known that the rates would be so high. But who is it that makes the rates so high? The ratepayers. With very few exceptions the rates are voluntary. The ratepayers and not the owners have the power of voting at the election of the Local Authorities, and it is only fair that those who have control over the expenditure should provide for it. It was always known that the rates were not a fixed quantity, and, therefore, I ask why should not the owner make a bargain, that if the rates do increase those who control the expenditure should pay for the increase, instead of the person who for 99 years will get no benefit from the increase. I know it is sometimes alleged that Income Tax is an exception, and that Parliament set the example of interfering with regard to the tax. I think I can show that the exception is rather apparent than real. Income Tax is a tax on incomes from whatever quarter derived, and varies with the income of the taxpayer. It is for conversion only that it is collected from the tenants.

(9.0.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

*(9.3.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE proceeded: The case is simple when a person takes ground from the freeholder at a long lease with the intention of building a house upon it, and giving up the house at the end of the term, and paying a ground rent during the term of the lease; but generally the arrangements are much more complicated, even as between the original freeholder and the lessee builder. This is a very common case. An acre of land is taken under agreement, the builder is willing to pay £100 a year upon it and the arrangement is that he shall build a certain number of houses, the ground rent upon each to bear a fair proportion to the rack rent, so that the ground rent is well secured. But the builder often comes to an arrangement with the freeholder by which he erects 10 houses on a quarter of the acre, and apportions £10 a year ground rent on each, leaving three quarters of the acre at a peppercorn ground rent. Then, the £100 being secured on the quarter of the acre the builder goes to the freeholder and says: "If you will allow me, I will build more houses and take a lease of each separately at £10 a year on consideration of which, and to supply me with capital, I will take from you £220 per house. Then the landlord does just what he would do if he put the money in the funds: he pays the builder a fair market price, upon which the ground rents are settled. If he had put this money in the funds he would be free from rates, and upon what possible principle, he having given far more than the original value of the land for the ground rent thus secured, on what possible principle is the State to come upon the ground landlord and insist upon levying an extra tax upon the ground rents for which he has paid the holding tenant? Is the landlord to be taxed simply because his security happens to be in houses, and thus his income happens to be derived indirectly from the land? Then suppose that instead of continuing to pay the ground rents the builder sells his property, he escapes all rates and taxes though he has made the profit out of the transaction, but the freeholder is to continue to pay the extra rate? There is no justice or equity in the proposal. Then suppose a builder having got a lease at a peppercorn or small ground rent wishes to sell his house, and meets with a purchaser who is not able to pay the full value, but takes an underlease at an improved ground-rent of £50, how is that to be treated? Is that to be taxed on the improved value of £40. Or suppose again that the man having got the under-lease disposes of it for a premium. You have all sorts of complications and how is it possible to fix upon each interest the due proportion of rates to be paid. We have heard a great deal of the unfair incidence of the Income Tax in that it is levied upon fixed incomes in the same way as it is upon the incomes that depend upon the health and strength of the man who pays; but it seems to me the incidence of a tax such as is proposed would create even greater hardship and inequality than is complained of under the Income Tax. At present the position is simple. The law makes property rateable, and the State levies the rate, not troubling itself about who ultimately pays the rate, but leaving the parties who own and occupy the property to make their arrangements among themselves as to how the burden of the rate shall fall. One proposal made is that half the rates shall be borne by the occupier and half by the owner, but I cannot see how it is possible to apportion the matter between them under the many complications of land tenure. I know the popular idea is that the ground of London belongs to wealthy dukes, supposed to be rolling in riches and living in ducal palaces far away from London, and contributing nothing to the improvement of London, from whence their large incomes are derived. But a great many people besides dukes—a great many poor people are owners of freehold property—a very considerable number of shopkeepers and tradespeople are owners, or intermediaries between owners and occupiers, and the proposal of the hon. Member is to tax

all these with a special tax, and not only the wealthy landlords, supposing they are wealthy. Then, among other suggestions for the assistance of the ratepayer an hon. and learned Gentleman below the Gangway seemed to look to the *octroi.* But who pays that in the French towns? Not the freeholder but the occupier. It is a direct charge upon occupiers as much as the rates, so there is no relief to be found in that direction. Then, again, it is suggested there should be an extra Probate or Succession Duty. Now, I am of the decided opinion that at the moment real property, taking rates and taxes together, pays more than its fair share of taxation, and I should cordially welcome any proposal by which personalty can be made to pay more to the rates, but I can see the exceeding difficulty of such a proposal, for you cannot localise personal property. The hon. Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. Bolton) proposes that Succession Duty should be increased, and to that extent the rates should be relieved, and considers that is fair, because owners benefit by the expenditure to which they now contribute nothing. But the hon. and learned Member forgets that Succession Duty must be uniform for all real property throughout the country, therefore you would be taxing all real property by the means of the Succession Duty, both the property that benefits by the improvements and the property that does not. Why should freeholders in Scotland, Ireland, or Wales pay an additional Succession Duty because the property of other freeholders in London, Birmingham, and other great towns has been benefitted by expenditure of the rates? Then it is said although it may be fair that ratepayers should bear the rates that are made year by year for the expenditure of the year, it is very unfair indeed that they should have to pay the rates for permanent improvements, or at all events, if they pay the interest of the money they ought not to pay that portion of the rates which is applied to repayment of the capital. Well, there are two ways of meeting that. In the first place unless the lease has a very short time to run it is the occupier, or at all events the lessee, who will get the benefit of important improvements, and it is right he should contribute towards the expenditure until he gives up possession. If the lease has a short time to run then he will not pay the whole, and as soon as the landlord enters into the property he will begin to pay for the improvements. There are not many improvements of which the benefits last more than 100 years. If it is considered that the amount to be levied by the rates for the repayment of capital falls unfairly upon existing ratepayers when spread according to existing Acts over 50 years, then let the term be lengthened. Even with a term of 50 years the amount having to be put by for repayment of capital is exceedingly small, about $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for 50 years, and about $\frac{1}{6}$ per cent. for 100 years. I know that the value of a reversion at the end of 99 years is practically nothing, and to tax a man for the ultimate benefit to be derived at the end of such a term would be the reverse of just. Any hardship in these cases can be got rid of by Parliament permitting loans to be contracted by Municipal Authorities, County Councils, and others, for permanent improvements on terms of repayment spread over a larger period than is now allowed. That being so, I say no reason has been shown why the House should interfere with the freedom of contract past or future. But it is said by hon. Members on the other side real property is not sufficiently taxed and rated and ought in some way to pay more. Now, hon. Members claim to speak very much in the interest of labour; and if there is any property which is of no use whatever unless labour is expended upon it, it is real property, and especially land. A house once built requires little labour expended upon it. Pictures and works of art may be enjoyed without any expenditure of labour. If a man possesses land he is foolish if he does not expend labour upon it. Therefore, taxation of land is taxation of labour in the most direct way; to increase taxation on land interferes with the power of the owner to employ labour upon it. I am speaking of land for productive purposes. I am not speaking of picturesque parks, though even in such cases there must be labour employed. In fact, I might go further and say that while other property may remain without deterioration, though no labour is employed, land deteriorates year by year unless money is expended in labour upon it. Then, I say, the land of the country ought to have our first regard, because a tax upon land is an interference with labour. With regard to ground rents, I have shown the present system has not been forced upon people by the law; it has simply grown out of mutual convenience. In itself there is nothing unfair, and the burden of taxation finds its proportion according to the convenience of the parties. For the State to interfere and attempt to apportion the shares would be most unwise and unjust, and, indeed, impossible with equity. Various interests have adapted themselves to the system which has grown up. People living in London have obtained large advantages, for which they have taxed themselves, and I am disposed to think that in many directions they have gone far enough, and no reason has been shown why they should be encouraged to more expenditure for obtaining what they conceive to be benefits for themselves while removing the burden from their own shoulders. I therefore strongly oppose the Resolution.

(9.20.) MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): It is worthy of note that Metropolitan Members on the other side have been silent during this Debate, while one of them has attempted to burke the Debate by moving a count.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I may remind the hon. Member that my hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore) has spoken.

MR. J. ROWLANDS: Yes; I did not mean that the silence was absolute; the hon. Member for Chelsea has spoken against the Resolution. The speech we have just listened to is one of the finest examples of the *laisser faire* doctrine I ever heard. It has a great deal of interest because of the extreme views expressed. The hon. Member has little sympathy with new-fangled ideas of work to be done by Municipalities. I could not help noticing the way in which he alluded to public baths, free libraries, and free education, and I shall be astonished after his speech if he—should his Party give him the opportunity—supports proposals for assisted education. All that the hon. Member for Stockport has said is familiar to Members who have had the privilege of sitting on the Town Holdings Committee. We have had representations from ground landlords, their agents and solicitors, describing all these processes with which the hon. Member interested the House just now. But they are not applicable, and especially not applicable in London; for where such arrangements exist, they were entered into some considerable time ago, before the taxation with which we are dealing was brought into existence. The only legitimate conclusion to the hon. Member's argument is that it is unjust on the part of Government to put any tax upon land, or to interfere at all with land. The hon. Member went so far as to say that when the rates were put on the State did not interfere at all with land, but allowed the rates to find their own level, as they might, between occupier and owner. That is quite true as regards England and Wales, but it is not true in regard to Ireland, and still less is it so in Scotland. In Scotland the State has interfered distinctly, and has said that a certain portion of certain rates shall be borne by the occupier and a certain portion by the owner; and so strong is the opinion in favour of that arrangement in Scotland that, while in 1888 Her Majesty's Government declined to make the division in England and Wales when introducing the system of local government, when in the next year they introduced the Local Government Bill for Scotland they had to embody the Scotch principle in that Bill—I think it is in Clause 27—and re-enact the principle of division of rates between occupier and owner, I ask the hon. Member's attention to this heresy on the part of his own Government. Only three years ago they renewed that principle, which they might have abolished if they had liked, or if they had dared, by means of their majority. The interference of the State in the division of rates has, then, been recognised, and it requires some better arguments than the hon. Member has adduced to show why, if the principle is good for Ireland and Scotland, it should not be applied to England and Wales. The hon. Member was very strong in the independence of his position, and I was sorry that while he was making his speech his worthy leader, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, was not present. Of course, when the attention of the hon. Member was called to the fact that the Chancellor of the Exchequer had written and spoken strongly in antagonism to the position he was taking, the hon. Member could only assume a lofty independence of Party leadership, and I hope he may give us some further examples of that. But let me recall to the House the position taken up by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. In a work that is looked upon as a standard authority on the division of rating by all who have studied this question, and in speeches, the right hon. Gentleman has maintained the position that, though occupiers may receive the immediate benefit of improvements, and should be held liable, in the first instance, for the rates, yet the advantage goes beyond the occupiers, and it is right that those who derive increased incomes from improvements should contribute towards the cost. I am glad the Chancellor of the Exchequer is now in his place. He can answer the arguments of the hon. Member, to whom I commend the book which has been referred to. In regard to the illustrations the hon. Member gave us, he omitted to mention the causes that lead to the rise in the value of land when it ceases to be agricultural land and is available for building purposes near a large town. Is it not the development of the industry of the neighbourhood and the growth of population which send up the capitalised value of land the moment it passes from agricultural to building land? Surely the hon. Member does not contend that the land shall continue to be as free from the burdens incident to town life as before it was town land. Our contention is, that when land becomes town land and more valuable, then it must take the liabilities of town land, which are undoubtedly heavier, and must be heavier, than the liabilities in connection with agricultural land. With regard to division of rates, I know there are differences of opinion. I admit the difficulties; but they have to be encountered, because the rates do not find their level and fall unfairly upon the occupiers, and we want to see the great landlords of the Metropolis paying something towards the improvements of the Metropolis. I acknowledge that more money is wanted for the larger municipal life of London, and I fail to see why we should not obtain it when we can with justice do so from a new source of supply. This is no new view in regard to London; it was the view taken by the head of the Metropolitan Board, Sir John Thwaite, in 1869, when the Thames Embankment and other gigantic undertakings were only commencing. We are this evening trying to focus much that has been put before the Town Holdings Committee. Our contention is that nearly £40,000,000 of debt which has had to be borne by the London County Council, in addition to the rates expended locally, has had much to do with sending up the capitalised value of the Metropolis. We say that those who should have contributed to the payment of these charges have escaped them, and we are determined that they shall escape them no longer. I would call attention to the Petition of the London County Council which was referred to by my hon. Friend (Mr. Stuart) in opening this Debate. The Petition asked that while the proper mode of relief was being settled a suspensory Act should be passed enacting that the burden of the rate should be borne by such persons or classes of persons as Parliament may direct. If Her Majesty's Government is prepared to accept that and carry it into effect, we shall be quite ready to let this question rest where it is until the Report comes down from the Town Holdings Committee; but we cannot let the question remain where it is unless something is promised by the Government. We know how the ratepayers of the Metropolis are suffering under the heavy burdens imposed upon them, and we are anxious that some relief should be afforded to them. Committees which have sat from time to time have advised that such relief should be given, and we are only asking the Government to do some of those things which have been advocated for the last 20 years as reforms necessary for the welfare of the Metropolis. Some people think that another Embankment should be made on the South side of the Thames, but I think no member of the London County Council would, under the present system of rating, dare to ask his Colleagues to vote the Expenditure necessary for carrying out such an improvement.

Look at the way in which the London County Council has been hampered in the reforms it has tried to carry out. A tunnel is much needed under the Thames at Blackwall. What has hindered the County Council in carrying out that work but the fear of increasing the rates to such an extent that it would be impossible for the existing ratepayers to bear the increased burden? I hope some practical issue will come of this Debate. Those who have studied the information collected by the Town Holdings Committee can have arrived at only one conclusion as to the course that ought to be followed to relieve the ratepayers of the burdens under which they are now suffering.

*(9.38.) MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE (Newington, W.): The hon. Member who has just sat down expressed a hope that some practical result would follow this Debate. I cannot say I think it is very discreet of those hon. Members who think with him to bring forward a Resolution, which is likely to be negatived, with the view of strengthening the Committee upstairs. The rejection of this Resolution will rather weaken the action of the Committee than strengthen it. I accept pretty nearly as my own the excellent speech delivered by my hon. Friend the Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore). I am, perhaps, somewhat at variance with some Members on this side of the House in thinking it desirable that the rates should be divided between occupiers and owners; and I am also of opinion, in regard to ground rents, that there is a period in the existence of such rents when the ground owners do not pay their fair share of the improvements effected by the expenditure of the rates. At the commencement of the period the parties contracting will see for themselves what new rates are likely to be imposed, and will make their terms accordingly. Towards the end of the term the reversioner will, of necessity, if he takes possession of the property, have to pay the rates on the enhanced scale. In that way he will pay on the value of his reversion, but there is a time between these two periods when, in my judgment—as a question of incidence of taxation—the ground landlord does not pay his fair share of the rates. But, after all, the question of the incidence of the rates on the ground landlord or the occupier is not the principal question which has been brought before us to-night. That will not increase the quantum of rates, and it is to increasing the quantum of something that hon. Gentlemen opposite have chiefly addressed themselves. For instance, the hon. Member for West St. Pancras told us that the London County Council had almost exhausted the patience of the ratepayers, and he almost wept, like Alexander, because he could not find any other pockets to pick. He laid immense stress on the debt of London. A few years ago it was only 3½ millions, and now it is 40 millions; and the hon. Member takes credit to the government of London for that fact. The London County Council is now almost in the position of Argentina—bankrupt. Having run up an enormous debt, they appeal to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other people in this country to act as guarantors in order to relieve them. In order to inspire us with confidence in his suggestions, the hon. Member tells us that there are vast schemes that the London County Council now have in view.

*MR. LAWSON: I never said anything of the sort.

*MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE: Then I misunderstood the hon. Member, but it seemed to me that he spoke of social reforms without describing what these reforms were. Confident as hon. Members may be in the powers and integrity of the London County Council, some of us would like to know the character of the social reforms they propose to carry out before we give them money for effecting them.

*MR. LAWSON: I spoke of the need for street improvements in the East and South of London, and also of the necessity of dealing with the questions of open spaces and housing of the working classes.

*MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE: I thought the hon. Member spoke as the mouthpiece of the London County Council.

*MR. LAWSON: Not at all.

*MR. RADCLIFFE COOKE: At any rate, the hon. Gentleman is a Member of that august body. When the London

County Council did that which many people thought a foolish thing—that is to say, when they deprived themselves of a large source of income from the Coal and Wine Dues which might have been devoted to the purpose of public improvements, although I thought their action one of pure folly, I stood up for them on the ground that we had created them, and should not quarrel with the discretion of our offspring. Before the Chancellor of the Exchequer is asked to provide a new source of revenue for the Metropolis in order to enable improvements to be carried out, it seems to me that we ought to know on what scale those improvements are likely to be effected.

(9.46.) SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): I am aware that the Amendment of the hon. Member for Shoreditch refers only to what he terms the ground values within the Metropolis; but the question is a very broad one, and affects some communities even more directly and to a greater extent than that of the Metropolis. If the House should accept the Amendment, and it becomes the substantive Motion, I should move to strike out the words "in the Metropolis," so as to bring it to bear upon the rest of the country. Whilst I am, in accordance with the terms of the Amendment, now dealing with the question as affecting the Metropolis, there are some general and very grave considerations which arise affecting the whole of the country. There are communities in Lancashire, the interests of which have been prominently called to my attention, which are suffering at this moment more than the Metropolis from the peculiar and unfair manner in which local taxation is raised. The House must recollect that this question is not one of mere money payment—of whether the burden is to be borne by the occupier or the owner. The occupier is the person who elects the representatives to the Sanitary Authority; he is the person who virtually has to determine whether there shall be a full and proper bearing of the burdens cast upon the community by the Legislature; and if it happens that the burden upon the occupier is too great, he will fail in his duty in carrying out the intentions of the Legislature in respect of the sanitary condition of the people. We have—speaking of the Legislature as a collective body—been very philanthropic, very sympathetic, almost virtuous in doing what we can on behalf of those who require the protection of the Legislative Authority. We have enacted that a certain sanitary method shall be devised and carried out, and we have thrown the expense of it on the occupying ratepayer; but, how ever wise and beneficent that legislation may be, if it throws upon the occupier a greater burden than he can properly bear, the occupier will fail in his public duty, and the objects of the Legislature will be frustrated. This question, therefore, ranges beyond the mere question whether it is wise that either the occupier or the owner should bear the principal burden of local taxation, and we must approach it with the desire to cast the burden, if we can, not upon one particular class as against another, but upon the class that justly ought to bear it and is best able to bear it. First, I will refer to the point which has been mooted whether the mere ground landlord or owner should bear any greater burden than he does at present. What is the position the ground owner occupies? He enters into a contract practically with the person who becomes the building owner—who builds a house on the land for the purpose of letting it. The ground landlord seeks to be paid in two ways—first by the yearly return or rent that he receives for the use of his land, and next, ultimately, by the reversion falling in, and by receiving all that exists on the land. And the contract is made, as has been said by the hon. Member for Leeds, with the knowledge that the occupier is to pay all the rates. So that the contract is not made primarily with the occupier, but with the person who takes the land and builds upon it. No doubt that was practically the way in which the local rates were first imposed on the occupier in the reign of Elizabeth, when the first Poor Law Act was passed. It was found convenient then to impose the rates on the occupier. Time went on; that was the principle adopted; and even in the term of present existing leases, the ground rental being secured by those leases, local taxation is a burden of the very smallest importance. But, as has been mentioned by many speakers in this Debate, since these leases were executed there has been a vast change in everything with regard to them. I confess that I have strongly preached the doctrine of the maintenance of contracts, and have held that contracts should be maintained, and fairly maintained, and not lightly set aside; but there is a doctrine in respect to every contract that is made that ought to prevail, and it is that if persons make a contract in respect to one condition of things and that condition of things entirely changes, if it is not in the power of such persons in those circumstances to change their contract or for a Court of Equity to interfere, it will be within the province and perhaps the duty of the Legislature to do so. Let us take leases, for instance, that were executed 80 years ago. The contract then intended to be entered into between the ground owner and the occupier, or agent of the occupier, was that the rates then existing, and for the reasons contemplated, should be paid by the occupier. But what has happened? No one then knew that the sanitation movement would come on, that there would be a police rate or a School Board rate levied, or that work of lighting and paving would have developed to the extent it has done, and so those rates one after another have grown year by year all over the country, and every one of them has been imposed on the occupier while the ground owner has escaped. Let me give an instance that has occurred, comparatively speaking, of late years. Our desire has been not only to improve the sanitation of towns, but to prevent the pollution of rivers. We have said, "We will have different methods of sewage created." The water in the river shall be pure; that is to say, it shall not be polluted with town sewage. In respect of this sanitary improvement you impose a burden on the occupier in the town through which the river passes or the locality that is affected by the sewage. What happens? You cast, it may be, a great burden on that locality; you render the water from the river tolerably pure, and therefore give a pure stream to the various wharves and works on the banks. You may in that way double and treble the value of those wharves and works. No doubt, the tenants derive the benefit while they hold the leases, but the moment the ground landlord obtains the reversion he has the benefit which has accrued from the payments of the occupiers. Every work of local improvement, whether in the way of sanitation, in the purifying of rivers, or in any other form, has gone to immensely increase the value of the property of the owner on reversion, that increase of value being given by expenditure on the part of the occupiers, and the occupiers only—expenditure that was never anticipated when the leases were made. Further, in many districts, by local or legislative authority, conditions have been imposed on property, as in the case that houses shall be kept in better repair, the cost of which falls on the occupier, while the owner benefits by it on the reversion. There is another view of this question to which I venture to direct the special attention of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. All those who take an interest in the subject have great hopes in the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He made a speech in 1871 that attracted great attention both in and out of this House at the time, and it has almost been taken as a text by very many speakers on the matter since. The right hon. Gentleman then admitted the anomaly that exists, and said that something ought to be done. But, unfortunately, that is the kind of language that has been used on the question for many years. My right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian, speaking to his constituents in the autumn of 1885 on the subject, said—

> "The ground landlord is a gentleman we have been trying to get at for many years, but his position is of such a peculiar character that none of us have been able to find out how to attack him rightly."

I think those views are, to a certain extent, those of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. There is one particular reason why I think the Chancellor of the Exchequer ought to consider this matter very favourably in the interests of the occupier. I presume it is the duty, as it will be almost the pleasure, of the right hon. Gentleman to find, if he can, someone whom he can tax with justice, and here he has an opportunity of doing so.

These ground rent-charges are a very valuable property indeed. A well secured freehold rent-charge is, I think, the best known property in this country next to Consols. There is not only the annual payment, but a capital value attached to it. Its value has altered very much. It has altered upwards, and there has in consequence been an increase in the value of the freehold rent-charges. In former years the price was 22 or 23 years' purchase; but times have changed, and for that change the Chancellor of the Exchequer was partly responsible. When he reduced Consols from 3 per cent. to 2¾, diminishing to 2½ per cent., it made people look about for other securities. No property gained so much in value, in consequence, as freehold ground-rents in the hands of landlords. At the present moment those rent-charges are worth some 27 or 28 years' purchase. There has been an unearned increment to the ground owner which has been given him, I will not say providentially, but by the action of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. If it be true that the owner, from no action of his own, finds his property increased in value from £2,200 to £2,800, does that not present a favourable subject for taxation? The whole tone of this Debate has been one of appeal to my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I appeal to my right hon. Friend now specially to consider that, whilst he has taken part in casting increased burdens on the occupiers, he has done nothing to increase the burden of the owners, for the pleasant arguments used a fortnight ago by the President of the Board of Agriculture to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian to show that the owner bears the whole burden of the rates do not apply to old leases, the rent on which is a fixed charge. The old ground owner bears none of the new taxation. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, who has cast this increased obligation, or helped to do so, upon the occupier, will, I hope, cheerfully accept a means of taxing it by local rates and Imperial taxation. Now we come to the question with which I do not esteem myself competent to deal—how best to effect this object. I once, at the instigation of my constituents, attempted to draft a Bill on that subject, and I admit fully that there is very great difficulty in carrying out our views, so many considerations having to be dealt with. There are high and low ground-rents, districts in which vast improvements have taken place, and districts where there have been none; there are reversions which are most valuable, and others which a man would rather not have. The hon. Member for Shoreditch said he wished to place upon the owner the exact burden he ought to bear, and I think the House will agree with that proposition as it stands. Sir, I think nothing but good can result from this discussion. If I may use the phrase, the more we knock this subject about the better it will be, although I admit I have no specific remedy in form and substance to suggest at this moment. I cannot say whether it ought to be taxation upon a reversion when it falls in, or whether a discretion should be given to the Local Authority or not. Yet I hope there are those like my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who will be able, either to-night or at some future time, to find some remedy for this evil. If we can bring home to the minds of those who can deal with the subject the fact that that evil does exist, the object of those who have taken part in this Debate will have been realised.

*(10.8.) MR. GOSCHEN: I believe when it was suggested earlier in the evening that the Motion ought not to be entertained because there was a Committee sitting, it was called a dilatory suggestion. I can assure the House with all earnestness that that is not our opinion at all. But we did and do consider, and we are strengthened in that view by what has passed, that it is impossible to come to any conclusion on the question now submitted to the House until we have the evidence and the Report of the Committee, which we trust will throw light on the subject. I think two hon. Members suggested this was dilatory action—the hon. Member for St. Pancras and the right hon. Member for Derby.

SIR W. HARCOURT: I did not say it was a dilatory suggestion.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: No, the right hon. Gentleman did not say it was a dilatory action, but, with a wave of the hand—that grand wave of the hand—he said—

> "We understand the way in which inconvenient Motions are got rid of by referring them to a Select Committee."

I think the right hon. Gentleman will admit that what he wished to suggest was that it was useful to a Government to escape from a discussion of this kind. Well, we are anxious to have the light of a Committee upon this most complicated subject. The House is aware that for many years I have given considerable attention to the subject of local taxation, ground-rents, and to the question of the possible taxation of reversions; but I am bound to say, after all the study I have given, that I am far from disposed to speak even upon the question of the incidence of rates upon owner and occupier with any kind of dogmatism or certainty, and, in all humility, I think I should be much the better for being able to read the Report of a Committee which has threshed this matter out to the very end. I wonder how many hon. Members opposite have realised, in fruition or expected fruition, the saying, "Oh, that mine adversary had written a book!" The quotations from the Report I made in 1871 and from sundry utterances of mine in times past have formed a very large portion of the present Debate. In this case I am not sorry that I embodied my opinions in a Report, for I see nothing in all the quotations read this evening that I am prepared to retract. At an early period of my Parliamentary life I considered this question of local taxation one of the most complex that could possibly exist, and I endeavoured to give it as much attention as was in my power. I have been quoted a good deal; but there is one portion of my opinions which, singularly enough, has never been reproduced either in past Debates or during this evening, and that is the degree in which I consider in that Report, and the Draft Resolutions which were accepted by the Committee, that existing contracts ought to be respected. There were distinct provisions in that Report as regards existing contracts, and I propose the following provision, amongst others:—

> "That three years' time ought to be allowed to elapse before a reduction would be made from the owner's rent in respect of the rates,"

and it was provided that at the end of those three years, though the tenant might deduct half the rate from the landlord, the landlord should be at liberty to add a proportionate amount of rent equivalent to the rate during the last three years. I do not say whether this was a wise provision or not. Possibly some hon. Members may think that we have advanced considerably during the last 20 years with regard to the disturbance of existing contracts. We have heard some doctrines on that point this evening. One hon. Member suggests that the sanctity of a contract must depend on the date it was made; others have suggested that it must depend on the changes which have since taken place; but I think that I am entitled, while standing to what I have said in past years, to remind the House of what I may call the safeguards with which the proposals we made at that time were surrounded. There is another point upon which there ought to be no mistake. What was suggested then was that half the rate should be deducted from the landlord. But some persons have considered that deducting half the rate from the landlord would mean that if a man had to pay £5 in rates he should be entitled to deduct £2 10s. That is not what is fairly meant by a division of the rates, because the rent paid to the landlord would differ according to the terms of tenure. Some persons might have paid a premium; others not. What is meant by a division of the rate is this: Supposing the rate were 1s. or 2s. in the £1, then half that rate should be deducted from so much of the rent as was paid; that is to say, supposing there was 1s. rate in the £1, 6d. in the £1 might be deducted from £100 a year which might be paid in rent to the landlord. I am able to say, on behalf of the Government, that we stand by the view that it is wise there should be a division of rates between the owners and the occupiers. The right hon. Member for Derby threw doubt on our earnestness in that respect in a previous discussion. He said that we stood shivering on the brink and showed some reluctance. We showed no more reluctance in dealing with division of rates between the owners and the occupiers than was shown by a previous Administration that was in Office for five years, and having been committed to that doctrine, never found time to carry out this difficult and complex proposal. We are prepared to accept this principle, difficult as it is to work out in practice, and to consider it as part of the views which we hold with regard to any amelioration of the system of local taxation. I concur very much in a remark which fell from the hon. Member for Shoreditch. He said that even in the interests of the landlords it was desirable that such a division should take place, because the fallacy existed that the landlords were paying nothing, and it was wiser that it should appear they were actually paying a portion of the rates. I think that in all the discussions as to who is paying the rates, whether occupier or owner, it is admitted that the owner pays some portion of the rates. In my opinion, he does not pay the whole of the rates. There is a certain portion which is paid by the occupier. From the Parliamentary point of view, it appears to me that where any contributions are made in aid of the rates by a Government, they are then taxed by their opponents with assisting the owners; but if a Government refuses to make any contributions, then they are said to be treating the grievances of the occupiers with indifference. I have been a Member of a Government which was attacked for years because they refused to assist the ratepaying occupiers. There were majorities in this House who denounced the Government for refusing to assist the occupiers; but when as a Member of the Government I had the advantage of being able to make some considerable contribution in aid of the rates, then the whole situation changes, and we are told that it is not the occupiers at all, but that we are animated by a base desire to assist the owners of property by an outrageous sacrifice of the Public Funds. It was the right hon. Member for Mid Lothian who took that view, and who denounced us for having assisted the owners. My right hon. Friend withdrew from the position as regards the towns when it had been pointed out to him; but my right hon. Friend first suggested that the whole relief had been given to the owners. I interposed, and my right Friend gently rebuked me for my interposition; but it had this effect: that it drew from my right hon. Friend the admission that as regards towns he did not hold that we had been assisting the owners. But I should like to know on which horse you would like to ride tonight. Is it the owners who pay rates, or the occupier? If it is the owners, then why should the right hon. Gentleman vote for the Motion, that we are to put a burden on the owners who, according to his hypothesis, are already paying the rates. That is his position. It is not mine as regards the towns, nor is it the position of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Agriculture. He (Mr. Chaplin) was speaking of the country, and this, I think, was recognised in that book from which Members have so often done me the honour of quoting. A distinction is there broadly drawn between the country and the towns. It is shown that in the country, after passing through certain stages, the rate is ultimately put on the shoulders of the owners, while in the towns a certain portion remains on the occupiers. This is contested by some political economists, and though I have had reason to consider the point over and over again, I believe my original proposition is, in the main, correct. And now let me ask, are the occupiers weekly occupiers, leaseholders, or what? Which of these many intermediate interests is properly denoted by the term "occupiers?" ["All."] Well, then I wish to know, are all to be relieved? Who is to be hit by this Motion? Who is the occupier and who is the owner? I think we may interpret this Motion as the bitter cry of rated London for relief. It is a cry to which not only the hon. Member for Shoreditch, but the hon. Member for St. Pancras applied, I think, a vivid expression. "We have to spend, we wish to spend, and we are going on spending; we see an enormous vista of expenditure before us; we are at the end of our resources find us some new means. Can you devise any means by which you can come to our assistance?" I do not know whether the hon. Member for St.

Pancras intended to suggest that loans were to be given up in future, but that everything was to be done out of the resources of the year. He made some interesting but rather Utopian calculations as to the time when the whole of the debt of London would be paid off and the happy reversioners would enter into their property free from all liabilities and be able to enjoy the immense addition to their property which had been made.

*Mr. LAWSON: Presently.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I do not understand "presently."

*Mr. LAWSON: The present debt still outstanding is £40,000,000.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: But how about the debts incurred next year and the year after, and the year after that again? I think we must take care that the County Council, who are ambitious, and who have many plans, many of which will redound to the prosperity of London, should not get into the belief that they might be able to contract debts or increase expenditure, thinking that it may be thrown on the future reversioner while it is voted by the present occupiers. It is suggested that we are to find increased resources which will be spent by the County Council. So far as that goes, I sympathise to a great extent with the ratepayers and the occupiers of London. I think there is a great deal to be said for hon. Members utilising the whole of their ingenuity and straining every nerve to see whether they can discover fresh sources of revenue by which the improvements of London can be carried out. An hon. Member behind me suggested that personal property should be asked to contribute in order to assist the improvements of the Metropolis. Other hon. Members have pointed out the difficulties that stand in the way of our adopting such a course, and I am glad to find the hon. Member for St. Pancras, although a political opponent, is satisfied with what the Government have done in that direction. Her Majesty's Government have done their best to come to the rescue of the ratepayers by endeavouring to render personal property liable to local taxation. I may, however, say that I do not think that the efforts of the Government in that direction have received adequate recognition.

Mr. J. STUART: We suggest that the relief to the Metropolis has been comparatively insufficient.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: This Debate has been singularly free from any display of Party feeling, and therefore I hope that hon. Gentlemen opposite will admit that we have made an honest effort to assist the ratepayers of the Metropolis, and have done our best to afford them relief by bringing personal property into assessment. Hon. Members, however, must not suppose that this subject is altogether free from difficulty. One well-meant attempt which I made to relieve the local rates did not meet with the success that I think it deserved. When I heard the hon. Member for Shoreditch pleading in eloquent tones in favour of the poor ratepayers of the Metropolis, pleading for further funds for carrying out social reforms, I thought of what had been the fate of my proposal known as the Van and Wheel Tax. Notwithstanding the strong arguments in favour of that tax, so many objections were taken to it that even the strong desire that existed to place a source of additional funds at the disposal of the County Councils could not over-ride them. I venture, with great deference to hon. Members opposite, to inform them, as one who has suffered, that the next tax, whatever it may be, which they may propose in aid of the resources of the County Councils will receive precisely the same amount of opposition that was offered to the Van and Wheel Tax, and that they will be unable to bring it forward without such an opposition as may, if time be limited, lead to the defeat of the proposal. The hon. Member for St. Pancras called upon the Government to come to the assistance of the ratepayers, and asked whether we could not do something to relieve them from the oppressive burden which was imposed upon them. All I can say is that I am satisfied that whatever new tax might be proposed for the purpose of relieving the ratepayers, would be opposed with far more energy than the ratepayers would display in its support; and I am afraid that even those hon. Members opposite who are now so anxious that we should come to the relief of the ratepayers might possibly be found in the van of those who would oppose any new tax that might be proposed, and which they might be persuaded would weigh upon industry, although, as a matter of fact, it would not do so. In all seriousness, I agree that it would be most desirable in the interests of the community that social, sanitary, and other reforms should not be hampered in consequence of local taxation being placed exclusively upon one class of property. But are we at this moment in a position to deal with this question? Hon. Members opposite seem to see this subject in a sort of glimmering and indistinct manner, and yet they appear disinclined to admit that it ought to be looked at by the light which would be thrown upon it by the Report of the Committee. They seem to see in a glimmering kind of way that there are at present some interests which they believe are not taxed, and which they think might be made contributory. The hon. Member for Shoreditch has referred to several plans by which contributions to the funds of the County Councils might be secured, which have been suggested by various gentlemen. Here, again, is a strong argument why we should wait for the Report of the Committee. I do not know to what extent I should be entitled to trouble the House by referring to those different plans, but I have no objection to say a word or two with regard to each of them. Certainly it is the case that some plans which have been floating in the air for years have already disappeared under the light of public discussion. The hon. Member for Shoreditch seems to be of opinion that the only satisfactory suggestion was that of Sir Thomas Farrer with regard to the Succession Duty.

Mr. J. STUART: I said that none of the proposals were an adequate solution of the difficulty.

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I should like to say that to-night this subject has been treated with singular prudence and moderation, and we have heard of none of those wilder suggestions which have often been made in reference to this subject. We have not seen the great landlords of London or any other particular class held up to odium; and the only clear proposition that has been put forward is that those who enjoy advantages should be called upon to pay for them—and that is a suggestion which we on this side are not prepared to dispute. We, have, however, to ask ourselves how far those who enjoy those advantages are already paying for them, and what they are to get in the future for the extra payments they may be called upon to make. It has been said that we must rely upon the Succession Duties alone for the relief of local taxation. The right hon. Member for Bury made an eloquent speech, but was obliged in the end to admit that he had no plan to meet the difficulty. He knew what he wished to bring about, but he did not tell the House how his object could be secured. The difficulty really is that, in the complicated system that prevails in the Metropolis, no man can tell exactly whether he is an owner or an occupier. Well, I frankly say that I do not know myself whether I am an owner or an occupier. I do not know whether I am one of those who are to be subjected to an additional tax, or whether I am one of those who are to be relieved. Take the case of a freeholder living in his own house. Everyone will admit, I think, that the value of the land is fully taxed. The inexorable myrmidons of the Assessment Committee take care of that. He already pays rates for his house, and it is now sought to make him pay rates for the site on which his house is built. How is the rateable value of his house to be separated from the rateable value of the site on which it is built? There are persons who say it can be done; it is, I believe, a plan suggested by Mr. Fletcher Moulton. I think it would be very difficult to do.

Sir W. HARCOURT: Why?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I will try not to be led away by interruptions. I say the task is almost impossible. The freeholder has paid the full value of the site and he has paid the full value of his house. How are you going to subject one part of his property to a particular tax? This is not a matter which so much touches the reversioner as the person who is the owner of the leasehold, which is continually rising in value. It is the cardinal point in the whole of this discussion that the Local Authority gets at this moment for the purpose of taxation the full value of the site of the house. I do not say it gets it from the right person. That is the point, but in my judgment the Local Authority gets the full value. There are few plans by which you may increase the amount of the rates to be paid. You may shift the burden from the occupying owner to the reversioner in some way or other; but still, what I want to point out is that the Local Authority will not get an increased amount of rates. Therefore, the question narrows itself down to this, to what extent do we wish to relieve one man and tax another—a perfectly legitimate question to put, which is quite different from that of getting additional resources. Let us keep that in view. Mr. Fletcher Moulton proposes there should be a valuation all over the Metropolis. You are to ascertain what is the value of the site and the value of the house, and then put an extra tax on the ground value. The site is to be considered a more fit object for taxation than the house, and the site is to pay the sum of 5s. in the £1. Who is the owner of the site? That is a matter of great importance. Are you going to ask the reversioner of 50 years hence, who is to come into the possession of the site, to pay the additional 5s. that is being imposed on the value of the site before he becomes the owner of the site? I think not. Therefore, who is to pay it? It is the building-owner, it is the leaseholder, who is to pay the additional amount, because it is the taxation of ground values, not the taxation of ground rents—that belongs to a past period; we have got beyond ground rents. We are taxing ground values. Now, the ground value belongs for a certain number of years to the leaseholder, and therefore the proposal would be this: Take a street of shopkeepers who have made agreements for their shops. They have paid fines and premiums for their property, and they are not subject to rack-rentals. They have got something valuable, they have got ground value, which they will enjoy as long as the lease runs, and the proposal would be to put an additional tax on that ground value. I think that is a proposal against which we should

have many protests from leaseholders when they found that the portion they enjoyed in the matter of ground value was going to be taxed. I am not surprised that the Member for Shoreditch did not give a very enthusiastic blessing to this plan of Mr. Fletcher Moulton which was issued by the "Committee for the taxation of ground values" at the cheap price of 1d. This is a very technical matter, and I will tell the House why I insist upon it. I wish to know who are the owners of ground values in London. So anxious are the Government to throw as much light upon this matter as they can, they are considering whether they could not produce a Return showing the number of owners, not only first owners, but various owners. It would be difficult to get this information, but it is of extreme importance. We talk about who is to be taxed. Let us know who are the people whom it is proposed to tax. What is the old original popular view? The popular view is this: that there are a few great landlords, who own the half of London—that they are men who have made great fortunes, and who have contributed little to the improvements going on in the Metropolis. The hon. Member spoke of the value, the rateable value, of London increasing from £15,000,000 to £32,000,000; but this is not an aggravation, it is an alleviation. The value of property in London, of course, increases continually. We have reached now a period when £31,000,000 or £32,000,000 represents the rateable value of London. Into whose pockets does that rateable value go? Amongst whom is it distributed? What proportion of the whole £30,000,000 or £32,000,000 goes into the pockets of the great original landlords? The proportion is, no doubt, a valuable portion, but what proportion? Then what proportion is owned by the man who has got the lease which is increasing in value? Take the case of a man who pays £100 a year ground-rent, and whose rent is £300 a year. Through his neighbourhood becoming valuable, that house, originally worth £300, is worth £500. There is an increase of £200. He gets advantage of the £200 increase until the reversion falls in. The reversioner does not get it. He gets it—the building-owner gets it by living in the house, or he gets it being able to let it at an increased rent. But that may not belong even to the one person. It may be divided between three or four middlemen. May I ask that this point should be cleared up—that these increased rents go into the pockets of a very large number of persons? Then I come to another body of men whom I must notice in this case, and that is the owners of ground-rents, and not only of freehold ground-rents, but improved ground-rents. There we get a new set of owners.

MR. J. STUART: They very seldom have the reversion.

*MR. GOSCHEN: Quite so. That is the point I will explain. Mr. Fletcher Moulton wants to tax them. Whatever goes on scarcely touches them at all. They have got a terminable annuity. Therefore, we come to this—that we do not deal with bloated landlords, but with persons interested in these ground-rents, who consider them the safest and best security into which they can possibly enter. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bury rather suggested that these investments were made popular because I reduced the interest on Consols. But did not debentures of Railway Companies and mortgages on land, which equally constitute terminable annuities, benefit from the same cause; and why should I pick out a particular form of annuity for special taxation? I believe these ground-rent investments are very popular among Building Societies, Savings Banks, and Charities. I hope I have dealt fairly with the argument of the hon. Gentleman. What I am anxious to do is to analyse the case of the owners of ground values, because it is important there should not be any false ideas abroad in regard to the subject. I fancy, if the County Council should have the idea that in this £30,000,000 sterling they have got a nest egg which they can use for taxation purposes, they will find that this sum will be diminished by the leasehold values, belonging to men, many of whom are already great contributors to rates, by the ground-rents, and by a vast number of other interests which they will scarcely wish to touch. I do not say, it is for the Committee to say, whether they ought to be touched or not; but it is well to see where we are in regard to this large sum. I cannot repeat it too often. Land is not owned alone by great landlords, but by a vast number of individuals in every form; and, therefore, if we are going to tax ground values, we have to consider not only those who own the reversion, but those who own every interest connected with the land. Having dealt with the proposal of taxing the ground value separately from the house, and with the question of taxing improved ground-rents, I will now deal very shortly with the further proposal with regard to Succession Duty. The hon. Member has already worked out to his satisfaction that £900,000 would be realised by placing a duty upon those £30,000,000; and he has got some evidence that every London owner dies in 25 years.

*MR. LAWSON: Sir Thomas Farrer.

*MR. GOSCHEN: Yes; it is an interesting calculation; I do not know upon what it is founded, but before I can accept the calculation it will have to be very narrowly scrutinised. I think the same hon. Member said the person who lived in the locality would pay the tax; I presume he meant to say it was the person who died in the locality who would pay the tax. But the point is that you are going to put the Succession Duty upon this £30,000,000. I have endeavoured to prove that this £30,000,000 is not realty in the ordinary sense; and if you put on this Succession Duty you will either have to be content with a smaller sum than £30,000,000, or you will have to tax for the Succession Duty the improved ground-rents of every form of leasehold property. Leasehold property pays Probate Duty as well as Succession Duty, and now you propose, in order to secure the £900,000 which is to be raised from Succession Duty, to tax the whole of that £30,000,000. I say, again, such a proposal would land you where you little expect to be landed. You would have to tax not only the reversioner, but the countless interests which I have analysed, before you would be able to realise your calculation. The question of increasing the Succession Duty stands upon its own merits. What I wish to point out is this—that you cannot, as Sir Thomas Farrer proposes, raise the amount which you wish unless you are going to put a special Succession Duty, and an additional Succession Duty, upon that particular form of the savings of the people which is invested in improved ground-rents and securities of that kind. You may propose it, and it is for the Committee to consider whether it ought or ought not to be enforced; but I am afraid I cannot give that blessing to the proposal which I am glad to give to any reasonable proposal for the relief of the ratepayers in London. I have to thank the House for listening to me so attentively and kindly on this very complicated question, but I should not like to sit down without considering for one or two moments more whether there is anything that remains over to be taxed, and whether there are any forms of interest in land which are insufficiently taxed, and which ought to be taxed. Now, I will say frankly it appears to me that the case of the reversioner stands upon a different footing from the case of many of the other interests of which I have been speaking. Let me go back to the position of the building owner. The building owner is practically paying every year full value both of the site and of the house. At the same time, it is rather hard upon him that a portion of his house is slipping away from him every year while he is being charged the full annual value upon it, and that enhances, to my mind, the danger and the difficulty of any such arrangements as would put an increased burden upon the leaseholder, who is part owner of the ground value, from my point of view. Well, now as regards the reversioner. It is said that the reversioner contributes nothing towards the taxation of the Metropolis. That point was ably argued by two of my hon. Friends, the hon. Member for Leeds (Mr. G. Balfour) and the hon. Member for Chelsea (Mr. Whitmore). That the reversioner is paying a portion of the rates seems to me to be scarcely open to dispute. He does not pay the whole; he may not even pay the whole of the improved value which is given to the land, because there the builder steps in and himself takes the risk. But now let me treat the question as between the builder and the reversioner. The whole feeling is constantly against the reversioner; but let me examine the position of the builder. He takes a property which may either increase or decrease in value. He makes a bargain that he will pay all the rates. After he has made the bargain the rates increase, and the House seems disposed to think he has got a case to go back to the landlord and say, "You ought to pay a portion of the rates." But suppose there is another element in the case, namely, the value of the site which he has taken; and suppose that, as the result of a change of fashion, or any other circumstance of the improvements which may be made at the expense of the ratepayers generally, the value of the house increases. Is the builder to have the right to change his contract against the reversioner, because the rates have increased, while he is to have the full benefit of the increased value from year to year which he has got from having acquired a site which at the date he acquired it was worth, say, £300, but which is now probably worth £500 or £600? Would it be right to disturb contracts for such a purpose as that? It is generally assumed that the value remains the same while the rates decrease; but in the vast number of cases the value increases not only *pari passu* with the rates, but in excess of the rates. Therefore it would be rather a strong order to say you should re-open the contract and let the builder deduct a certain portion of the increased rate from the owner, while he is to have the full benefit of the increased value of the site. It appears to me he has made a double contract. He may say, "I take all my chance of increased rates, and all my chance of increased value of the site." I admit the shrewdest and most farseeing builder would have scarcely contemplated the possibility of a School Board going in for pianos. On the other hand, some builders by their shrewdness and foresight have developed estates until they pay rents far in excess of the rates imposed by the County Council, the School Board, and the other Local Authorities. There is another point which, so far as I have observed, has not been touched upon either in treatises or in debate. The House will remember that we have passed Bills for the equalisation of rates in the Metropolis. We have relieved the rates in the East End of London and increased the rates in St. George's, Hanover Square, and other parts of the Metropolis. The rates having been thus lowered in the East End, are we to take a part of the rates from the landlord because there has been an increase of rates generally in the Metropolis, while, at the same time, the legislation of this House may have put the ratepayers in the East End in a better position as regards rates than they were in before? Hon. Members have spoken invariably of the aggregate increase in the rates; but they have not, so far as I have heard, touched upon the rate in the £1. I do not dispute that the rate in the £1 has increased; far from it. I am one of those who have thought during the last 20 years the rates have been very high, but, at the same time, there ought to be no exaggeration on the point. Through the labours of the Committee we may get to know where we are; but as regards St. Pancras, so far as I can make out, the rates during the last 20 years have increased only from 4s. 11d. to 5s. in the £1. I put that forward merely by way of meeting the suggestion made with regard to the increase of rating in the Metropolis, and without desiring in any way to minimise the fact that serious additions may have been made. Another point the Committee will have to examine is the degree to which the reversioner has been benefited by the rates, what rates he has benefited by, to what extent, and when the benefits will begin to accrue to him. Some hon. Members have gone far afield in that respect; they say that the reversioner benefits by every rate imposed; that on his coming into the property 30 or 40 years hence he is benefited by the expense which is now incurred by the education of the children of the parish in which his property is situated. The argument may be that the children, being intelligent, will be less likely to attack his property 30 years hence; but I think that would be a fine-strung argument, and I have not seen, so far, that education has had the effect at all of increasing the foundations on which property is supposed to rest. I confess there are some rates which I think might fairly be admitted to confer a permanent boon, but I cannot think the argument that every rate benefits the reversioner will be generally accepted as true. Reversioners may enter into their property 10, 40, 50, or 60 years hence; are you going to attempt to value them at these distant dates? I should like to know what the Committee will say on that point. To value, according to the years which are still to run, what interest the reversioner may be likely to derive from any particular rate—that, it seems to me, would be a Herculean task to undertake. Possibly hon. Members may suggest that it should be done by some kind of rough justice, that we should take some date after which we are not to respect contracts, or, I suppose, some date after which the interest of the reversioner is not to be considered. At the same time, I am much in the same frame of mind as regards the reversioner as the right hon. Member for Bury, except perhaps that I have somewhat more regard for existing contracts. At all events, I want to examine what benefit the reversioner has received, and whether the contract was so entirely in his favour as my right hon. Friend seemed to suggest. This might open a question for the Committee to consider, namely, whether, when the reversion falls in, it is or it is not then a fit subject for taxation either Imperial or local. When a reversioner enters into possession, you have at all events got something, the taxation of which may be considered to fall upon a benefit which has been derived. I therefore lay down these principles. I do not think that this House, as at present constituted, desires to tax reversioners simply because they are reversioners, unless it be proved that they are benefited, and until the time comes when you can ascertain the benefit. If you think you can ascertain it in advance of this, I think you will find it extremely difficult to do. I have been anxious to deal with all these questions not in the slightest degree in a tone of dogmatism. I have been anxious to show that we admit that the finance of the Metropolis is a matter which deserves the earnest consideration of this House. I have admitted that that finance is not in a satisfactory position, and that I think it desirable to consider the question of the division of rates between owner and occupier. I have admitted it is desirable we should examine carefully how far any such division should take place with regard to existing contracts and under what conditions. I have admitted that it is desirable that fresh taxes should be found, and but for my own unfortunate experience I might have been sanguine that we might have found additional sources of taxation for objects with which we all sympathise. I trust, then, that I have met the Motion of the hon. Member in a fair spirit, and that I have not minimised the importance of the subject, and I hope also that I may have brought home to the House that this is a matter upon which they ought not to make any premature declaration before they have been able to examine it by the light which the deliberations of the Committee will supply. Do not let us raise false hopes; do not let us, by laying down any broad proposition such as that which is embodied in the Resolution, hold out hopes to the ratepayers of the Metropolis which we may not be able to satisfy to the degree they may desire. We may be able directly to tax owners and to mitigate the position of the present ratepayers, but to pass this Resolution would give the ratepayers the impression that greater things will be done than possibly we may be able to accomplish, and therefore I earnestly ask the House not to accept the Motion of the hon. Member.

*(11.22.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): The Chancellor of the Exchequer all through his singularly able speech has attached enormous importance to the deliberations of the Committee which has now been sitting for some five or six years. I agree with him that if we were about to settle the details of this question it would be advisable to have a fuller and more complete investigation than can possibly be afforded by a Debate in this House. The right hon. Gentleman has avoided to a great extent dealing with the principle of the Resolution, and has raised, with great ability, many objections on points of detail. He has said we ought to wait for light to be thrown upon this question by the Committee. I venture to say that we do not want the guidance of any Committee upon a question of principle. Questions of principle are settled by the House of Commons, and are not relegated to Committees, and, therefore, the opinions that a Committee may entertain upon what is not only a financial question, but a question of great public policy, cannot be accepted as binding upon the House. But as the Chancellor of the Exchequer and all the speakers on the Government side have laid such great stress upon the desirability of having light thrown upon this subject by a Committee, let me remind the right hon. Gentleman that a Committee has already reported upon the question. That Committee comprised some of the ablest men of the day in the House, including John Stuart Mill. In 1866 this question was in a very different stage, but every argument urged before that Committee can be urged now with tenfold force. The Members of the Committee included the present Duke of Rutland, Sir M. W. Ridley, Mr. Baring, and Mr. Ayrton. The Committee reported that the expenditure upon permanent improvements had tended to increase the value of the Metropolis, that the whole of such expenditure was of a novel character, and that in analogous cases one moiety of the charge had been imposed on the occupier and the other on the owner. They therefore recommended that in any re-arrangement of the financial resources of the Metropolis, a portion of the charge for permanent improvements should be borne by owners of property. Now that is exactly the recommendation we are asked to vote upon to-night. The House is not going to vote on Mr. Fletcher Moulton's plan or Lord Hobhouse's plan, but on the question whether the freeholders of the Metropolis ought not to contribute some share of the taxation of the Metropolis. A large amount of evidence was given before the Committee by Sir John Thwaites, the then Chairman of the Metropolitan Board of Works. I will read but one question and one answer as summing up the whole case. Sir John Thwaites was asked—

> "Is not the Board of Works, as at present constituted, a machinery for improving the property of the landlords in reversion at the expense of the tenants?"

His reply was—

"I am not able to say that we have been appointed for that purpose; but the practical result is that we do improve the value of property in the way that I have described, and that the landlord does not contribute a fair share towards the cost of these improvements."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer has challenged us to deal with this question on the point of principle, and has dwelt upon what he calls the impossibility of dividing the value of a house from the value of the land upon which it is built. I see no difficulty in the matter. There are two values. There is the value of the ground and the value of the structure erected upon it, and the value of the structure is entirely due to the capital expended upon it by the builder, whilst the value of the land, over and above its agricultural value, is entirely due to the presence of the town in which it is, and to the improvements introduced at the expense of the town. The Chancellor of the Exchequer must not suppose it is contended that houses should be exempt from taxation. Both houses and lands should bear their fair share. But the land has derived a value from the expenditure upon the locality, and that value becomes the owner's at the expiration of the lease. What is the principle we consider to be embodied in this Resolution? So far as I have followed the Chancellor of the Exchequer I think he will not deny the truth of the proposition, which is simply this: that where by public expenditure the value of land, whether houses are built upon it or not—and the House will observe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer never alluded to vacant land in his speech—when the value of the land, whether built upon or not, is permanently increased, the owner of that land should bear a fair share of the cost of those improvements. It is no answer to say there is great difficulty in applying that proposition. You may have to meet many technical difficulties, though I do not think in regard to London there are so many complications as have been described; the question of ownership of ground rents is a simple matter, and the questions that arise out of technicalities and various changes in ownership of houses may be left outside the main question. Now, during this Debate two questions have arisen, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer has very adroitly answered the one by raising the difficulties of the other. The first question is, Are we satisfied with the present apportionment of taxation between owner and occupier? The second question is, Shall we apply additional taxation to the owner in respect of the special benefit his property derives from the public outlay? These propositions the Resolution lays down, and how has the right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to escape from them? The Chancellor of the Exchequer was perfectly right when he said that under the present system we have the whole of the present value of property taxed, that by whoever it is paid the £30,000,000 or £34,000,000 under Schedule A. of the Income Tax represents the taxable income of the property of the Metropolis, and, therefore, the question is the apportionment of this taxation between the parties liable to payment. In addition, I would go a step further and say where it is definitely proved—where it can be shown that property has been increased in value by public expenditure, it is fair that the owner of that property should contribute his share to the public expenditure undertaken for his benefit. There is nothing new in this proposition. In local taxation the burden is apportioned according to the benefit conferred, but Imperial taxation is levied alike throughout the Kingdom. In rural districts people are not subjected to the taxation levied in towns, because they do not derive the same benefit as inhabitants of towns do from the expenditure. In my own county to such an extent is this division of interests carried that there are actually three police rates, the rural police rate in the agricultural part, the mining police rate in the mining district, and another rate in the pottery district. Where there is this distribution of benefit there may be this distribution of burdens. The hon. Member for Chelsea accuses us of a desire to penalise the ownership of land, and he says that there is no more reason why we should tax ground rents than railway debentures or Consols. But debentures and Consols do not increase in value by reason of public improvements as ground rents do. I put a parallel case. Take the rating of railway stations. They are not rated on a uniform basis, but in respect to the traffic carried on. A railway derives specific benefit from the traffic of a town, and is rated accordingly, and why should not the same principle be applied to land in the town? Passing now to the question of apportionment, and saying no more on additional taxation in respect to ownership, there is the question in regard to the incidence of local taxation—on whom does the burden ultimately fall? Now, if I may venture to say so, I agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his correction of his Colleague the other night. I think he was strictly and economically accurate—and his correction was accepted by my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian—that in the rural districts where the rates increase the rents decrease, and where the rates decrease the rents increase; therefore, in that case, the burden is borne by the owner, and therefore, any subsidy for the relief of rates is a subsidy for the relief of owners. But, said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that does not apply to urban ownership. Exactly; it does not apply to ownership in London where the whole burden falls upon the occupier. ["No, no!"] The whole increased burden does. You may raise the question as to what it was when the lease was granted, but every new rate imposed since the lease was granted falls exclusively and entirely upon the occupier. This is one of the main proofs of an injustice which the proposition in the Resolution of my hon. Friend seeks to rectify. Where the whole rating falls upon the occupiers the occupiers naturally object to expenditure, and have an interest in keeping it down, and preventing the County Council from carrying out the public works they desire, and which in the interest of London should be completed. If you divide the burden between owners and occupiers the latter will be relieved and that difficulty will not arise. There is another class of cases the Chancellor of the Exchequer has not alluded to, and I am almost surprised that he does not look at it from an Imperial point of view—cases where large premiums are paid to owners of ground rents on renewal of leases. When and how are these premiums taxed? They do not contribute to Imperial taxation, they do not contribute to local taxation; these large sums paid on renewals of leases escape taxation in any shape or form until indeed they are re invested by the fortunate gentlemen who receive them and come under the Income Tax. The Chancellor of the Exchequer desires to have the light to be thrown on these matters by the Committee, but let me refer him to the Report of the Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes. On one of the most important points in connection with this controversy the Commissioners draw attention to the fact that land available for building purposes in the centre of London, the capital value of which is very great, is only rated at its nominal value as vacant land; and the Commissioners go on to point out the public advantages that would follow if this land were more equitably rated. There is a large class of this property exempt from local and Imperial taxation which does not come under the Death Duties, and this property would be included within the terms of this Resolution. The next point to which the Chancellor of the Exchequer called attention to in reference to the difficulties in an apportionment of taxation, he associated with the question "Who owns London?" We reply that for the purposes of this Resolution, the freeholders own London. The landed property of London is estimated to be producing annually £35,000,000, and of this the proportion going to freeholders is estimated at half, or by some authorities a third. I should say in the City more than a half, in the suburbs probably less than a third. But whatever the proportion, a large part of this income of £35,000,000 belongs to the owners of the soil.

*MR. GOSCHEN: Owners of ground rents included?

*MR. H. H. FOWLER: Ground rents or improved ground rents. I know there are intermediate leaseholders, but so far as ownership is concerned this Resolution may be construed as dealing with the freeholders. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bury says the Resolution might be extended to include other towns, and that is not unreasonable. He knows there are difficulties in Lancashire, and there are difficulties in other parts where land is not generally held on freehold tenure. But there is no case similar to London where such enormous sums have been expended for main drainage and other public purposes to which the freeholders have made no contribution, but of which they ought to bear a share. No doubt there are some rates which ought to fall upon the occupier and the occupier only, there are annual rates from which the living occupier derives all the advantage; but the point and gist of this Resolution is this, there are owners of property who have had their property doubled, trebled, quadrupled, aye quintripled in value, mainly by the expenditure of public money on public works, without which that property would probably have decreased in value—are they or are they not to contribute their share of the burden from which they have derived such great benefit? We shall vote for the principle contained in this Resolution. We do not for a moment conceal from ourselves or from the House that there will be very great difficulty in applying the principle as there are difficulties in applying any principle. But the difficulties, local or Imperial, can be surmounted. The broad and general principle is this, that those who derive a benefit shall share the burden. On this Metropolitan Members will vote to-night, and those who are in sympathy with the Metropolitan ratepayers will support this attempt to take one step forward in a much needed reform of local taxation.

(11.50.) The House divided:—Ayes 149; Noes 123.—(Div. List, No. 88.)

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Supply,—Committee upon Monday next.

SUPPLY REPORT.

Resolutions [12th March], reported.

CIVIL SERVICE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1890-91.

Class VII.

1. "That a sum, not exceeding £55,831, be granted to Her Majesty, to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for certain Expenditure in connection with the Relief of Distress in Ireland."

Resolution agreed to.

Class I.

2. "That a Supplementary sum, not exceeding £136,200, be granted to Her Majesty to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1891, for Expenditure under 'The Light Railways (Ireland) Act, 1889,' and upon certain Railway Works not yet included in that Act."

(12.0.) Mr. CRAIG (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): I wish to ask two questions in connection with this Vote. The first is, Whether the expenditure on the two light railways which are not yet brought under the Light Railways Act, 1889, can be properly included in a Vote for the year ending the 31st of March, 1891? The other question is, In what clause of what Act does the Secretary to the Treasury find that a light railway means a railway of 5 feet 3 inches gauge?

(12.2.) The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): The House has power to vote monoy for any purpose. It was distinctly stated to the House by my right hon. Friend (Mr. A. J. Balfour) that as regards the expenditure on the two lines referred to—one of which has since been brought under the Act of 1889—the sanction of Parliament had been anticipated. Parliament has, however, been good enough to sanction the provision my right hon. Friend thought it right to make under the circumstances of the case. The hon. Gentleman also asks me about light railways of 5 feet 3 inches gauge. I am afraid I must answer that question by asking him another—namely, whether he can point to any Act, or any clause in any Act, which prohibits a light railway being 5 feet 3 inches gauge? The term "light railway" has no reference to gauge, but refers to the weight which can be carried over the line. As far as I know that is the only definition, and you might if you liked make a light railway with a gauge of 10 feet.

(12.3.) Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): The definition which the right hon. Gentleman has just given us is interesting and, I believe, novel. I should like to know in what Act it is to be found, as it is entirely at variance with recognised practice in railway matters. I challenge the Government to deny that it is a definition which has been improvised for the purposes of their own Light Railways Acts. I do not, however, think this question should be fought out on a purely technical and limited point like this. What I object to is that we should have to pay for these railways. There is no more reason why English people should be called upon to pay for light or heavy railways in Ireland than there is why people in Ireland should be called upon to pay for the construction of mineral railways for the development of the mines of Cornwall. I object to the way in which this Vote has been obtained. It has been elicited that the Government have deliberately spent money in anticipation of the sanction which this House might or might not accord to such expenditure; such a proceeding divests this House of any sort of control over the expenditure of the public money by the Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) was complaining the other evening of the way in which the control of this House had been withdrawn from Naval expenditure. To-night we complain of the way in which the Government have anticipated the sanction of this very irregular expenditure, which they admit is really a sort of charitable dole to the people of Ireland, owing to the miserable condition in which they have been placed in consequence of the tyranny and the disgraceful misgovernment to which they have been subjected. If it were not for the tyranny of the landlords there would be no perpetually recurring famines there. If it were not for absentee landlords, who sit on the opposite side of the House, we should not be constantly seeing the hat sent round to provide for the distressed tenants. It is through our maladministration of Ireland that we are called upon in this way to put our hands in our pockets for the relief of the starving peasantry. If we on this side cannot prevent this policy, we have a right to protest against it as much as we can. I have no doubt that throughout this business there has been the amount of jobbery and robbery of the public which is usual in Tory transactions. We have a duty to perform to our constituents in this matter, and we avail ourselves of this opportunity of protesting against a deliberately unconstitutional method of evading Parliamentary control. We shall do our best to make it known to the country that the Party in power are deliberately robbing the taxpayers for the purpose of executing jobs.

(12.14.) DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid): The hon. Member who has just sat down has talked about jobbery and robbery. Jobbery indisputably exists; robbery may be a fact. Many of my friends supported the Government in this Bill. They did so because their constituents were starving, and they thought it well to get what they could out of the Government. Anything is better than nothing. I would not vote for the Government for the simple reason that I got nothing. I wanted to have three lines of light railway constructed. The right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary disappointed my constituency in the matter, and I voiced the dissatisfaction of those poor people in the only way open to me last night.

Resolution agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Resolutions [12th March] reported.

1. "That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the service of the year ending on the 31st day of March 1891, the sum of £596,025 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

2. "That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day day of March, 1892, the sum of £9,036,700 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolutions agreed to:—Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Courtney, Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Mr. Jackson.

Bill presented, and read first time.

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Twelve o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 16th March, 1891.

PROMOTION IN THE NAVY.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*LORD SUDELEY, in rising to call attention to the block of promotion in the rank of lieutenants in the Royal Navy, and to ask what steps the Government propose to take to remedy it, said: My Lords, I am anxious to call your Lordships' attention to the block of promotion which exists at present in the list of lieutenants in the Royal Navy, and I wish to ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to remove it, and especially what steps they propose to take to prevent it arising again. Your Lordships will remember that I ventured to bring this question before the House three years ago for discussion. On that occasion my noble Friend was able to announce that a small alteration had been made, and that a certain number of commanders had been added to the list. I am sorry to say, notwithstanding that was done at the time, but a slight amelioration was made, and that the discontent which then existed among the senior officers has very much increased. In saying this, I wish at once to state that I do not bring this matter forward in any way as an attack upon the Admiralty. It is no fault of the Admiralty that the present state of things exists; unfortunately they have inherited it. But when I say that I must also state that it is in my humble judgment absolutely essential that the question should be gone into very carefully, and that this terrible block which exists should, to a certain extent, and as far as possible, be removed, and that steps should be taken to see what can be done to prevent its arising in future. I should also like to say, that I do not in any way wish to say a word against the retiring scheme of Mr. Childers. I have always argued that that system of retirement was a great charter to the Navy. It was an enormous boon to the Service, and if occasionally some slight alterations have been found to be necessary, it is only certain small points which it has been found desirable should be carefully examined and altered, so that any friction that may arise may be put right, and the whole scheme be enabled to work properly. Unfortunately I am bound to admit that when Mr. Childers introduced that great retirement scheme he made in the opinion of a great many people one slight mistake in desiring to have in all ranks young officers, and he thought it would be possible to reduce the lieutenants to a very low list. He accordingly laid it down that the number of lieutenants should be 600. I am sorry to say that experience has proved that that is a mistake. That number has been found far below what is absolutely essential, and lately we have had it increased by 250. According to the present arrangements the list ought to be 1,000, of whom 800 are lieutenants, and 200 navigating lieutenants. It must be remembered that the lieutenants' list is the back-bone of the executive service of the Navy. It is from that branch that you must expect all your small craft to be commanded in time of war; and when you remember the enormous number of torpedo vessels and other small craft which you will want in time of war you will see at a glance how necessary it is to have a very large body of efficient lieutenants. But my Lords, there is another point in the matter. It is from this branch that all your commanders, all your captains, and all your Admirals in the future must be picked. If, unfortunately, any inefficiency exists, whether it is from want of proper training or from other causes, you may depend upon this: that sooner or later your great Naval Service, on which this country so much depends, must ere long find default. I am happy to say that from all I can find out from officers who are far better acquainted with the subject than I am, that the present body of lieutenants are a splendid picked body of men. They are officers thoroughly imbued with devotion to the great Service to which they belong, and with knowledge and efficiency in everything that is required for the Naval Service. Unfortunately, in the senior ranks, there is a great amount of discontent, and I am afraid I must admit it is a discontent and dissatisfaction which you could do nothing else than expect. Before I go into the question to show your Lordships how very old these lists have become, I should like to point out that in the opinion of the most competent judges it is well known that the lieutenant of 10 years' seniority has arrived at that point when he ought soon to be promoted. A lieutenant of 10 years means that he has also been for 10 years a midshipman and sub-lieutenant, so that he has had, practically, 23 years' service in the Navy. A lieutenant of 10 years' seniority is in a difficult position. In a few years more he must be retired. Indeed, for a year or two it is very difficult to know what employment to give him; but in addition to this a lieutenant of 10 years, if you do not promote him, sees that ere long he must be retired, there will then be no prospect of his attaining flag rank, and he naturally becomes discontented and dissatisfied. In former days a naval lieutenant was a man who, provided he was a thorough seaman and was able to work his ship well under sail and knew something of gunnery, was looked upon as a competent officer. In the present day a lieutenant is a very different person. He must be a skilled officer in every sense of the word: he must be a skilled engineer; he must be a skilled gunnery officer; he must be a skilled mechanic; he must be able to wield our large ironclads; he must be able to take a battalion of men on shore; and he must have a very considerable acquaintance with international law. In fact, a lieutenant is a very skilled officer if he has been properly trained, and it is at this point that you ought to select your men to fill the vacancies in your Commanders' List. If you do not do that you have not got the best men in the prime of life. Now, I should like to point out to your Lordships how very much older the list is becoming—taking it for granted, as I have attempted to show, that a lieutenant of 10 years is as old as he ought to be before being promoted. In 1871, two years after the retirement scheme was introduced, I find there were 79 lieutenants of over 10 years' seniority; in the year 1880 those numbers had gone up to 171; in 1885 they had gone up to 262; and in 1891, at the present time, they have gone up to 316. You have got over one-third of your lieutenants' list, composed of men who, in the opinion of all the most competent judges, are far too old and ought to be retired. Now, how is this to be done? How this is to be remedied is of course a very difficult matter. The average numbers of promotion from lieutenant to commander is only 23, and this number you cannot possibly increase. It can be proved to demonstration that now only two lieutenants out of every seven can possibly become commanders; and I apprehend there can be no doubt when you once get your list up to 1,000 that it will be only two out of 15 who will ever become commanders. This is most unsatisfactory to the officers, and I apprehend it is most detrimental to the Navy. Then the question arises as to the increase in the numbers of naval cadets. I know it is very often said, "Oh you need not trouble to supply that at all, the supply will always be equal to the demand, and it is perfectly immaterial, as far as that part of the question is concerned, whether the lieutenants are discontented or not." But, my Lords, I apprehend that is rather a mistaken view. Surely if parents and guardians gradually find out that a young lad going into the Navy has practically no chance of ever becoming an Admiral, if they see that he will have to wait until he is 40 before he has a chance of retirement, I cannot help thinking that before long you will find great difficulty in getting the number of naval cadets which you now find it so easy to obtain. A great many lieutenants have lately been promoted—or rather I ought not to say "a great many"—but those lieutenants who have been lately promoted, have been, in most instances, men of such seniority that they can never become Admirals. If you take the period of five years from 1886 to 1890, you will find that 136 lieutenants have been promoted. Of those only 15 were under the age of 34. Now, taking the commanders' list at six years and a half, and taking the captains' list at 15 years, a lieutenant of 34 must wait until he is 53 before he can be at the top of the captains' list. It is, therefore, perfectly clear that hardly any of these officers can ever become Admirals. Not only have you this great objection, but you have, from the economical point of view, a terrible state of things existing, because what you are really doing is that you are greatly increasing the cost of retirement; you are promoting officers who must have retired before they can become Admirals, and in that way you do very great harm to that charter of retirement which Mr. Childers brought forward. If you take the last batch for promotion you will find there were seven commanders and 11 lieutenants promoted, and then only one can ever hope to obtain flag rank. The youngest lieutenant promoted was 34 years and a-half old, the youngest commander was 39, and practically only one was ever likely to attain flag rank. Now it may be said: "This is all very well, but what possible remedy can you apply?" I know it is a matter of very great difficulty, and what I venture to say I do say with the greatest deference possible, but I know it is a matter of very serious importance, one that has to be faced, and this question divides itself into three points: first of all as to the small number of lieutenants; that small number which, I believe, at present is only 837 instead of being 1,000, is due to the melancholy fact that many years ago the number of naval cadets was reduced. It was determined only to enter a smaller number, and the result has been this: that do what you will you must wait until you have reared up a larger number of midshipmen and sub-lieutenants. Until you have done that you cannot get your list up to 1,000. As regards that point I should like to ask my noble Friend whether the Admiralty are perfectly sure that the number of naval cadets now being entered will be sufficient to keep the list up to that point. I should also like to ask him whether they are thoroughly convinced that at no future time can such a terrible mistake occur again as that of reducing the number of naval cadets. It is possible that if this were done at any future date you would find in time of war, however much you might rely upon your Merchant Navy for a certain number of reserve officers, that your efficiency as a Naval Power would be much deteriorated, and that you would be in a far worse position than your foreign rivals. As regards the second point, "the present discontent." I know well, among the senior lieutenants, they have one remedy in view: their idea is that you ought to increase the number of commanders and that you ought to give a certain number extra promotion. I venture humbly to think that if this were done it would be the greatest mistake that could possibly be made. I am inclined to think that what was done by the Admiralty three years ago was a mistake, and that if they increase still further the commanders' list they will be acting directly in the teeth of what Mr. Childers stated when he introduced his retirement scheme in 1870. I do not think anyone can wish that those higher ranks should be gradually increased again or that we should again see the Navy in the state it was in before 1870. What I should like to hear my noble Friend state boldly is this: that there is no intention of increasing the commanders' list, and as far as extra promotion is concerned it is absolutely impossible in the interest of the Service to give it to them. I know that will be a great blow to the senior lieutenants; I wish it were otherwise, but I am sure no one can look at the true interests of the Service without seeing that that ought not to be done. Well, then, what can be done? You have over 330 senior lieutenants, men who have in their youth looked forward as midshipmen to the day when they might become Admirals, but from no fault of their own, imbued as they are with the utmost zealousness, they find they cannot get promotion, but must linger on until they become 42 and then they are retired. You cannot say, "If we cannot promote them we will retire them," because, unfortunately, owing to that mistake in reducing the number of cadets you have not got a sufficient number of sub-lieutenants to fill their places. You dare not reduce your lieutenants' list below what it is; it is already too low and, therefore, do what you will, these unfortunate men must remain where they are. If that is the case, I think there is only one answer: that if you find from no fault of their own these men must remain in a position for which they are unfitted, I think the only thing you can do to alleviate that position is to give them such special increase of pay as may be desirable, and, as far as you can, to make them as happy and as comfortable as possible. In saying this I have no wish to suggest that you should give a large increase of pay or, indeed, any general increase whatever, but I do think in common justice that you ought to do for these men in the way of pay what you are unable to do for them by way of promotion or retirement. We now come to the third question, and I think the third point is one which, perhaps, is even more important than the other two, and that is "The question of the future." What are you going to do in the future? You are increasing the number of cadets very largely, so that you may have 1,000 lieutenants. In a few years you will be in the position of finding that you have this larger body of men in the rank of lieutenants but the same number of promotions. You cannot increase the number of 23 promotions every year, however large your lieutenants' list may be. You have got only two men in 15 to be promoted in every case. This is a subject of the greatest difficulty, but I venture to think that the suggestion I threw out three years ago ought to be seriously considered and tried as an experiment. My suggestion was that the only way of meeting the difficulty was by an optional retirement of a limited number at an early age. When a man reaches 32, or even 30, you ought, with the consent of the Admiralty, to give him the power of an optional retirement. If you do this you will allow him at a comparatively early age to seek some other position in life before he becomes too old. I know it will be said in answer to this—"But your best men will go; your best men will be picked out for other appointments and you will lose them." I quite admit that is a danger, but it is a danger not at all to be compared to that of having an enormous body of men discontented and dissatisfied. If the Admiralty will look into the matter I think they will find that is the only solution of the difficulty and I do sincerely hope, in the interests of the Navy in future, that some such plan may be adopted. It is certainly cruel to allow young men to enter the Navy without telling them what their prospects are likely to be, and I think there can be nothing worse than to rear men up to the sea through all the hardships that they have to undergo, thinking they may possibly one day become Admirals, when they ought to know that there is only the smallest possible chance of their doing so. As regards the position of lieutenants, as they now exist, there are several matters which might be improved, and there are some questions occasionally arising which, I think, might be smoothed over in their interest. Thanks to the courtesy of my noble Friend and the Admiralty, I have been allowed to have the exact number of all the special allowances in the lieutenants' list. I find that the total number who have special allowances are 378; of those there were 145 senior lieutenants, 69 gunnery officers, 127 navigating lieutenants, and 37 commanding torpedoes. Well that is payment by results, and I think there can be no doubt that a great deal of satisfaction might be given if you were largely to increase the number of those special allowances. The more efficient you make your officers, and the more you pay in that way the better it will be for the Service. But there is also another subject, and I am very glad to see my noble Friend Lord Sidmouth opposite, because he has on several occasions suggested that the number of interpreters in the Navy ought to be increased. He has very rightly pointed out that a knowledge of German and French is, in the Navy, of the utmost importance. I am sorry to say that, although in the junior ranks an officer has to pass in French both as midshipmen on entering and also on passing their examination; still there is no encouragement given to them for keeping it up, and I have the best authority for stating that the knowledge of German and French is not kept up in any way as it ought to be in the Naval Service. In fact I am told on very good authority that there is hardly any foreign Navy in existence where the knowledge of foreign languages is not infinitely better maintained among its officers than in ours. I think this is a small point which might be very well looked into by the Admiralty, and if you can, by offering encouragement to those who know those languages, induce them to keep up their knowledge by giving them some little additional allowance, I think you will be doing a very good service. There is another suggestion I should like to make, and it is this: This matter, I am afraid, unless some special steps are taken will be again shelved. It is not a question only for members of the Admiralty; and aware as I am that it is a point of the most vital importance connected with the *personnel* of your Navy, I would venture to make a suggestion. Unfortunately, Naval Members of the Admiralty are so overwhelmed with the consideration of the details of the profession that we cannot expect them to give such matters as this their attention, and what I venture to suggest is this: that the First Lord of the Admiralty should appoint a Committee of some of the best men in the Navy, together with an accountant and an actuary, and that this question should be thoroughly solved. It must not be shelved. There are other points connected with this subject, but I will not weary your Lordships any more. I am sure your Lordships sympathise most deeply with these men who have been so long in the Service, and who now find that they have no chance of promotion. These officers have gone through considerable hardships; all of them have served for many years in foreign climates far away from all the pleasures and advantages of home life, and it is a most terrible ordeal for these men, when they come back from foreign service, when they have served for many years in the rank of lieutenant, to find not only that they cannot get their promotion but that you are obliged to keep them and cannot allow them to go. I assure your Lordships this is a most vital point. The Navy must be kept up to its full efficiency; but if the body of naval officers from whom you draw your supplies to command your Navy is not maintained in a state of efficiency, and if they are allowed to become discontented and dissatisfied, it will be a terrible thing for this country. I sincerely hope my noble Friend will be able to give a satisfactory reply.

*THE EARL OF BELMORE: My Lords, I wish to say a few words generally in support of what has fallen from my noble and learned Friend opposite. In 1883 I brought forward the subject of the pay of naval lieutenants, and after I had done so, and I hope partly in consequence of that, my noble Friend Lord Northbrook and Lord George Hamilton did materially improve the position of the lieutenants as regards pay. I do not mean to follow my noble Friend opposite through all the various points he has raised; but I agree with him that it is not advisable to increase the number of commanders. I think doing so would only make a difficulty higher up the list. I do not know whether the figures he has given with regard to the age for promotion will always hold good; no doubt, generally speaking, they will hold good; but the time must come when a number of captains will be retired very closely together, that is those who approximate in age; and possibly some few men promoted after 34 may have the good fortune to become Admirals, although, unfortunately, most of them will not arrive at that rank. I hope we shall hear from the noble Lord who will reply on behalf of the Government that the Admiralty will take this matter up seriously, and see what can be done in it.

*VISCOUNT SIDMOUTH: I think the noble Lords who have spoken have not at all exaggerated the importance of the question, and I do hope the Government will give it their serious attention. I cannot think why the Admiralty cannot do something in the way of improving the position of naval lieutenants, as my noble Friend has suggested, by giving them opportunities of employing themselves in the Profession on special duties. There is another matter in which they might be encouraged to become proficient in the interest of the Profession, and that is in connection with steam machinery. That is a matter which receives no kind of encouragement now, but I think it will eventually become one of the most important points in naval instruction. Many officers are now studying it, but they get no encouragement whatever for doing so, either in the way of promotion or of increased pay. Then I would make another suggestion. Why should not the Admiralty give to officers while serving as first lieutenants the position of brevet commanders? That would certainly be some little encouragement to them. There is nothing more disheartening to a man than to serve for 10, sometimes even 13, years without getting one single step in rank. Another point which I think the Admiralty ought to consider is the expediency of increasing the number of lieutenant-commanders, as the number of small vessels is increasing. I think it would be only just to those officers who have served so long an apprenticeship if a number of commanderships with brevet rank were given. I trust the noble Lord who is about to reply will tell us that the Admiralty are prepared to take these matters into consideration.

*LORD ELPHINSTONE: My Lords, my noble Friend opposite raised the same question in the years 1887 and 1888, and I am very much afraid that the answer I must give him in 1891 must be to all intents and purposes almost the same as that which I gave him on the two previous occasions. The circumstances are not changed in any way whatever, as they existed then they exist now. The relative numbers on the list are slightly altered, but the circumstances are the same. Turn whichever way you will, look at this question in whichever way you will, you are met by this problem—how are you to pass a list of 1,000 lieutenants into a list of 270 commanders? By no human ingenuity can you do that—you cannot ensure that every one of them shall enter into commanders' rank. Upon that subject I think I cannot do better than quote the words which were used in the Debate on the former occasion, in 1888, by a noble Lord whom I do not see present, Lord Camperdown. He said—

> "With regard to the passing of 1,000 lieutenants on to the list of commanders, it is quite true it is impossible to promote 1,000 lieutenants into a list of 250 commanders, and, therefore, your Lordships must recognise at once as absolutely certain the fact, that a large number of lieutenants would never be promoted, and that by no scheme that human ingenuity could ever devise, would it ever be possible to effect that object."

That is perfectly true; as his Lordship said, by no scheme which human ingenuity can devise, will you be able to pass a list of 1,000 lieutenants on to a list of, now, 270 commanders. My noble Friend spoke as if he was afraid there would be a falling off in the entries of naval cadets. But in spite of the uncertainty of promotion the Admiralty have no difficulty in this respect; on the contrary, the applications for entrance are larger than we can meet. In the Debate of 1888 the noble Lord said that that would be a very unfair argument to make use of, as no boy of 14 could know what he had to look forward to. But it so happens that I did not make use of that argument. However, if boys of 14 do not know what is before them, I hope that their parents and guardians do, and they accept the position and prospects for them. Previous to 1886, as the noble Lord has said, the number of entries had fallen very considerably, they were very erratic. One year they were so many, and another year less, and another more; but since 1886 we have introduced a uniform number of entries, and 120 cadets are now entered every year on board the *Britannia*, which are all that can be accommodated on that ship: that is to say 240 altogether are as many as she can accommodate. Roughly speaking it takes 10 years for a newly-entered boy to become a lieutenant, but in consequence of the small number of entries in 1883-4-5, the number of lieutenants at this moment is actually diminishing, and will continue to do so until 1893, after which there will be a rapid rise, and at the end of 1895 the combined lists of lieutenants and navigating lieutenants should reach the maximum number of 1,000, which was decided upon in 1887. In order to maintain that number, that is, 1,000 lieutenants, a smaller number of entries as naval cadets would suffice, probably 90 instead of 120, but to reduce the number to 90 would be to keep the sub-lieutenants' list at 220, or only just sufficient to feed the lieutenants' list. This would have a disastrous effect. It would reduce the average length of service of the sub-lieutenants to 2½ years, which, under the present course of instruction, would practically deprive the Fleet of their services in time of peace, and would be of great disadvantage to the young men themselves, as it would deprive them of any opportunity of gaining experience at sea. Therefore, taking the number of lieutenants at 1,000, the full number of entries of naval cadets should continue to be 120, at all events, until the average length of service was 3½ to 4 years. That would in all probability permit some system of retirement to be carried on. It may seem hard, and at the first blush you may say that it is very hard that a lieutenant should not be allowed to retire, even if he wishes to do so, before he is 40, but we have to consider at the Admiralty what are the requirements of the Service. We require the full number of 1,000 lieutenants, and until that number is reached we cannot permit retirement, except, of course, where there are special and exceptional circumstances. Where there are special circumstances in the cases, each of them would be inquired into by the Admiralty by itself; but at the present moment, with the list below its full strength, we cannot allow of any retirement. The noble Lord has suggested that retirement should be allowed, if they wish, at 32; but I would submit that, after the great expense to which the country has been put in the matter, this cannot be seriously advocated. These officers are educated by the State, and after the great expense to which the country is put in their education, they surely can hardly be permitted to retire at the age when their services are most valuable. At present the whole of the lieutenants are employed, and instead of the sub-lieutenants' list being of any assistance to the lieutenants' list, some four or five lieutenants are actually employed at this moment in doing sub-lieutenants' duty. I do not know whether the noble Lord is aware that the requirements of the Service have very largely increased of late. Taking the Mediterranean and Channel Fleets, we have 60 more lieutenants and navigating officers now employed in those two Fleets alone than two years ago. It is, therefore, perfectly clear that until the various lists are up to their full number there can be no question of voluntary retirement, and even then, when the lists are up to their full strength, I do not hold out the slightest prospect to my noble Friend that retirement at 32 should be allowed voluntarily on the part of lieutenants. For the reason that I gave just now, that they are being educated by the State, the Admiralty would not be justified in allowing them to leave at so early an age. I do not know whether the noble Lord opposite suggests that an officer claiming his retirement is to give up his retiring pay. If an officer is to have the right to claim retirement at 32, and to be put on half-pay, it would mean enormous increase to the retired pay-list of the Navy. It would probably amount to a very large sum. Again, are we to discriminate between the more valuable and the less valuable officers, and to allow the less valuable officer to get his retirement and to refuse retirement to the more valuable one? That would be a very bad course to adopt, and would be a premium upon inefficiency. Then I would like to point out that the position of lieutenants with regard to promotion is much more favourable now than at any time during the last 20 years. The proportion of promotions was formerly 1 in 15; previous to 1887, 2 in 9; since 1887, in consequence of the increased number of commanders, 2 in 7. Between 1870 and 1887 there were 418 promotions, or 20·9, or, roughly speaking, 21 a year; from 1888 to the present time there have been 30 a year. In selecting a batch of officers for promotion the Admiralty always take care to select a certain number who can become flag officers. But this difficulty of promotion is one that exists everywhere. It is not peculiar to the English Navy; it exists in the Navies of every foreign Power—they have all met with the same difficulty. But our average time for the service of sub-lieutenants is much less than that in any foreign Navy. Then as to pay, there was an increase given to the Service in 1888, and there are now many classes of extra pay which were not known formerly. My noble Friend suggests, I think, that we should give 2s. a day more after 12 years' service. Formerly the rate of pay was 10s. a day, and after 10 years' service the pay was increased to 12s. a day In 1888 an alteration was made; and after eight years' service a lieutenant received 12s., and after 10 years 14s. But, as I have said, there are a great number of classes of extra pay. The noble Lord went through them but he did not give the amounts. These extra or additional allowances mount up very considerably. A senior executive officer can receive from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. a day extra; a gunnery lieutenant in the same way can receive from 1s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. extra; a navigating lieutenant 2s. 6d. a day extra, and a torpedo lieutenant 2s. a day extra. All that is in addition to the 14s. a day; so that really your Lordships will see the pay has been greatly improved of late years. But it is quite possible something may have to be done in the direction suggested by my noble Friend, but it is a matter requiring careful consideration, and it will not be by increasing the number of commanders. Then my noble Friend suggests that a Departmental Committee should be applied to inquire into the whole of this subject; he says that the naval Lords of the Admiralty are so thoroughly well employed that they would have no time to undertake it. Although it is quite true that the Admiralty are much occupied at present, they do propose making a further and a careful inquiry into the position of the lieutenants with a view, if possible, of improving it, not through the medium of a Committee, but within the Admiralty itself. The Admiralty are fully cognisant of the unfortunate position in which senior lieutenants are placed, and are most anxious, if possible, to improve their *status.* Therefore, the matter will be very shortly gone into. They recognise fully the zeal of these officers. And, now, there is only one other point on which I need touch, and that is the question of interpreters. As my noble Friend knows, in regard to that question of interpreters, French is compulsory on the *Britannia* and at the college. At Malta, the French and Italian masters have £100 a year; and payments per hour, per head, or per lesson are made at Alexandria, Halifax, Bermuda, the Cape, Mauritius, and Bombay, while the terms in China are under consideration. The Admiral or the senior officer on a station orders midshipmen to attend for instruction in these classes. They all receive a certain amount of pay. I need not trouble the House with the figures. On the *Britannia* prizes are given for French every second term—the first of £2 10s., and five others of £1 10s., while every fourth term there are three of £5 each, and five of £2 10s. each. Afloat, at the annual examination of acting sub-lieutenants and midshipmen, there are prizes for French—one of £10, one of £5, and five of £3; for German, one of £10, and one of £5; and for Italian and Spanish, the same prizes as for German. This scheme of prizes was only started last October, so that I can give no statistics yet as to how it is operating. I should add that any officer who may go abroad for the study of a foreign language is allowed full pay for a period of four months, provided he passes an examination to the satisfaction of the Civil Service Commissioners on his return, and if appointed to a ship as interpreter for European languages, will receive 2s. 6d. a day in addition to his other allowances, if appointed interpreter in Oriental languages, 1s. 6d. a day in addition. I think I have now gone through all the questions which have been put to me. I am not quite prepared to answer my noble Friend Lord Sidmouth's question as to brevet rank off-hand at this moment, but I think I have sufficiently answered all the other points.

*THE EARL OF NORTHBROOK: My Lords, as I happen to be the only Peer present who has had anything to do with the administration of the Navy, I wish to say a few words upon this subject. In the first place I must express my entire concurrence with the noble and gallant Lord who has just addressed your Lordships, and with the noble Lord who has introduced the subject in regard to the very valuable, and in many cases, distinguished, services of the lieutenants. There can be no doubt they are among the finest and best officers in Her Majesty's Navy. Also I wish to say that there is no one who has had to fill the office of First Lord of the Admiralty who has not felt the extreme difficulty of selecting for promotion to the rank of commander from the lieutenants' list. As the noble Lord representing the Admiralty has said, it is impossible for every lieutenant to be promoted, and it is still more impossible for every lieutenant to become a post-captain or an Admiral. At the same time, from what the noble Lord has told your Lordships, it appears that at the present time the proportion of lieutenants promoted to the rank of commander is greater than it has been of late years, and, doubtless, the lieutenants are in a better position than they were some years ago. I hold that it is most desirable that the lieutenants who are now serving should not be debarred from the prospect of promotion, even though they should have arrived at an advanced age. Although it is not possible for them to become Admirals they may do good service as commanders and post-captains. At the same time, as the noble Lord has truly said, it is necessary in the interests of the Navy that a certain number of younger officers should be promoted, and I believe the First Lord has always opportunities of giving promotion to young officers who distinguish themselves in the scientific branches of the Service. Now, I quite agree with the noble Lord who has spoken on behalf of the Admiralty, and I differ from the noble Lord behind me, who introduced the subject, with respect to the proposal of a voluntary retirement of lieutenants at the age of 32. I think if the Naval Administration were to adopt any such course as that, there would be exactly the same difficulty in the Navy as there has been in the Army; and there would be a number of young men in the prime of life, probably some of the best officers in the Navy, hanging about without employment, having taken small pensions, and therefore I cannot think that is a proposal which should be adopted by the Admiralty. I must say, in this matter, that such a proposal would be a very lame conclusion to come to. I think your Lordships will have gathered from the speeches you have heard that it is almost impossible to propose any real solution of the difficulty; and, perhaps, on the whole, the right view is that taken by the noble Lord representing the Admiralty, that the difficulty might be met by making an addition to the pay of officers in certain cases. That was done some years ago; if necessary you can do it again, and the Admiralty will no doubt, if desirable, adopt that course. But I have been struck with an anomaly in the speeches to-night. While my noble Friend complained of the block in the lieutenants' list, which numbers now between 800 and 900, and said it was quite wrong to increase the commanders' list for the very good reason that the commanders would not have employment, yet at the same time he said it would be a good thing to increase the number of naval cadets. And the noble Lord representing the Admiralty has said that the number of naval cadets now appointed is somewhat more than is necessary to keep up the lieutenants' list to the number of 1,000. Your Lordships will see at once that the steps taken to increase the number of naval cadets, and to bring up the lieutenants' list to 1,000, must increase the difficulty which exists in the promotion of lieutenants. Out of 1,000 lieutenants there must, of course, be a smaller proportion promoted than are promoted now. Therefore, it seems to me that, instead of the Admiralty deserving to be congratulated upon having increased the number of naval cadets, it is very questionable whether the course they have taken is a wise one. It may be a popular step for the moment, but will it not be sowing the seeds of greater difficulties in the future? I must confess I was disappointed in the speech of the noble Lord representing the Admiralty. There has, no doubt, been a great increase in the Navy during the last nine or ten years, and that increase has necessarily required an enlargement of the Executive list—at any rate, of the lieutenants' list. It appears to me this is precisely the time when a question, which has been under the consideration of naval officers of great distinction for many years, should now be prominently brought forward and taken into consideration by the Admiralty—I mean, the question whether the full list of lieutenants is to be still made up from entries of naval cadets, or whether the time has not arrived for the same course to be followed in the Navy as has been adopted for many years in the Army, namely, to admit to the commissioned ranks of the Service some number of warrant officers. Warrant officers now receive a very high education, and they are a very valuable body of men who, as it seems to me, cannot long be left without their legitimate ambition being satisfied in that manner. I think that would be a statesmanlike way of looking at this question, and a proper recognition of merit and service. The Admiralty should consider, I think, whether they ought to depend entirely upon the entries of naval cadets, or whether, on the other hand, there ought not to be some other way of increasing the lieutenants' list than from the growing list of naval cadets, which must involve, if the present course of entering 120 per annum is continued, all the difficulties which have been referred to. This question is a very difficult one, and I have great confidence in the Board of Admiralty at the present time giving every consideration to this and other naval questions. I venture to throw out this suggestion, as it appears to me the only real solution of a long-standing difficulty which has not yet been solved.

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

Moved, "That the Lord Foxford (*E. Limerick*) be appointed to take the chair in the Committee of the Whole House this day in the absence of the Earl of Morley."—(The Lord President, *V. Cranbrook.*)

Motion agreed to.

EAST INDIA OFFICERS' BILL [H.L.]

(No. 49.)

THIRD READING.

Bill read 3ª (according to order).

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): My Lords, I have an Amendment to add by way of a new clause. A question has been suggested whether the illness of a Governor General or other officers, and the necessity of their coming home, might be considered a public or a sufficient ground. It has, therefore, been thought necessary to introduce a new clause in order to make that quite clear. The members of the Council and Lieutenant Governors can all come home on sick leave at the present moment, and this is only for the purpose of putting the other members on the same footing.

Moved, after Clause 2, to insert the following Clause:—

3. "It shall be lawful for the Secretary of State in Council to grant to any of the several officers specified in the Second Schedule to this Act leave of absence from his duties under medical certificate for a period not exceeding six months; and the absence, whether in or out of India, of any such officer upon leave under medical certificate as aforesaid, shall not be deemed in law a resignation and avoidance of his office or offices or employment, but such officer during such absence on leave under medical certificate shall retain his office or offices, and shall, on his return to and resumption of his duties, receive half his salary for the period of such absence, but if his absence shall exceed six months his office or offices shall be vacated."—(*Viscount Cross.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Verbal Consequential Amendments agreed to.

Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

The Earl of Northbrook

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.

(No. 62.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*LORD THRING: I have to ask your Lordships to read this Bill a second time. It is, in effect, little more than a declaratory Bill. It removes certain difficulties out of the way of the County Councils. Its first object is to declare that County Councils may unite for the purpose of establishing schools for technical education by removing the difficulties which might arise in many cases if they were confined to their own districts. This is obviously expedient, because several Councils can form a great school for the benefit of their united counties, instead of single counties forming schools for their own districts only. The next object is very similar. It is, that County Councils may give scholarships outside their own counties. It would really amount almost to an absurdity to compel a County Council to grant a scholarship to, perhaps, a bad school within its own district when it might make that grant for a good school without its boundaries. The 3rd clause is merely declaratory. It is simply to remove doubts as to the capacity of County Councils to carry over money to a suspense account until they have agreed what scheme of technical education they will adopt. I may say that I have been in doubt whether the counties have not this power under the existing law; but if they have not this clause is absolutely necessary, as most of the County Councils have not yet made their plans, and they must have time to complete them. This Bill has been passed unanimously by the House of Commons; it is assented to by Her Majesty's Government; and I think, therefore, I may ask your Lordships to grant it a Second Reading.

THE LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Viscount CRANBROOK): My Lords, I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill of the noble and learned Lord. The only remark I need make upon it is that the last clause has, I believe, been drawn by the authorities of the Local Government Board itself; and the proposal there made is rather to explain and expand the old Act with regard to technical instruction. I hope your Lordships will give the Bill a Second Reading.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow.

REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN WRITS (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 61.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

*THE SECRETARY FOR SCOTLAND (The Marquess of LOTHIAN): My Lords, I would ask your Lordships to give a Second Reading to this Bill. It is a purely technical measure. It is to remove some doubts which have arisen in reference to the Local Government of Scotland Act, 1889, in certain details. Some doubt has been expressed whether under one of the sections the registration of writs relating to districts, transferred by the Boundary Commissioners under the Act from one county to another, can be properly made in the Register of Sasines, and the Bill proposes to postpone the dates of Orders for a year from the time mentioned in the Act, the object being to enable them to come into effect at the same time. With that short explanation, I have to ask your Lordships to give the Bill a Second Reading.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House to-morrow.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) ACT, 1890, AMENDMENT BILL.

(No. 58.)

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

DURATION OF SPEECHES BILL.

OBSERVATIONS.

*LORD DENMAN, in rising to call the attention of the House to the peculiar circumstances under which the Clerk of the Parliaments refused to insert a notice by the Lord Denman, said: My Lords, owing to the peculiar circumstances attending the preparation of the Bill which I had the honour to present to your Lordships' through my being unable to read, I was obliged to employ an amanuensis, and what I thought the most objectionable part of the Bill was left out. I begged the printer to send me a proof, but he did not do so. The words which were left out were "when necessary to limit." Now, my Lords, I have had great practical experience in this House, and I have seldom heard in it any speech which I should have wished to be shortened; but there is so much said about not detaining your Lordships, and noble Lords still go on without knowing how long they are speaking, that really I think the quiet announcement or ascertainment of the length of a speech could do no harm and could offend no one. The other night the noble Lord the Earl of Dunraven spoke for three-quarters of an hour, but I am sure if my Bill had passed the noble Marquess who opposed him would not have got up to prevent him going on. As during the last few Sessions the Lord Chancellor has fully established the Rule that the Order to read a Bill a second time is a reality, I humbly submit that that Rule should now prevail. The newspapers report that a Bill is rejected, but the Motion for the rejection of a Bill is a different thing from a Motion for its Second Reading. The noble Marquess thought I was trespassing very much in interfering alone with Government measures which he wished to be carried; but, really, to postpone a Motion for 10 months does seem to me to be a very severe mode of treating so old a person as myself. I think some little indulgence should be given to the age of one who has been a constant supporter of Her Majesty's Government, and one who wishes to be respectful to every Member of this House. I stated that I would move this as a matter of privilege; but not seeing it in the list as a Notice, I did not dare to move. My Motion was that the Order for the postponement of the Second Reading of the Duration of Speeches Bill should be rescinded. That was a proceeding which the Lord Chancellor thought not impossible, as it appeared that some Bills had been put in and had been read a second time when the House was not sitting. My Lords, I am not afraid of offending the memory of those who are gone, because I only speak the truth —*De mortuis nil nisi verum.* The origin of all the difficulty about Second Readings was that Lord John Russell, being hampered with the Reform Bill in 1856, at first put it off for three months to a time when he knew the House would not be sitting. I would now have ventured to move that the Motion for reading the Bill a second time passed on the last occasion be rescinded; but as it has not been placed on the Paper, I would only ask that it might be put on the Paper with notice at some day after Easter that the reasonableness of the proposal might be considered. Since that time I may be allowed to mention that a measure has been introduced on the subject into the House of Commons; but only 116 voted upon it, 72 being against the Second Reading, and 44 for it. It does really seem to me that as this is a mode of expediting the business of Parliament, which has been so very successful in other Assemblies, it ought to be followed here, and I hope your Lordships will not make it impossible for this Bill to be carried this Session. In the other House the hon. Member has declared that he will bring in the Bill next Session, but that may be at some distance yet, and it certainly would be a convenience if such a measure were passed. It has been stated that I entirely base my Bill upon the meetings of working men on the railway at Derby. They have the Scripture read to them while they are eating their breakfasts, and at the end of half an hour the organ is played, but the speaker always manages to conclude before that time. With regard to that being a libel upon this House I say nothing; but I thought it was very severe, and I bought up every copy I could of the magazine in which it appeared in Derby and in London. But I must say this, in reference to speeches in this House: The noble Marquess at the head of the Government is always short and always interesting. I quite agree with that; but, at the same time, I must remind your Lordships that his speeches very often act as a dinner bell, for directly they are concluded all the Members present go out. My intentions are honest, and I do not like being cut short, as I feel I am. I could not hear the question proposed, and therefore I could do nothing but protest against it afterwards. The Standing Order of this House is that no Member shall speak a second time except to explain some part of his speech. Now, we often have replies upon Motions touching upon the speeches of those who oppose the Movers, and it really is very necessary for the purpose of debate that there should be some notice given of the opposition to any measure. One may not be always suppressed. I certainly remember when at Eton the late Premier Marquess of this country, Lord Winchester, putting my head under water; and he kept it there until I really did not know whether it would come up again; however, I may say he has been a great friend of mine ever since—he was then Lord Wiltshire, and we were always afterwards the best of friends. I hope when I wish to speak on such a subject as that of Sheriffs with which I am thoroughly well acquainted, I shall not be obliged to retire speechless as happened on one occasion, because it is perfectly well known that when 8 o'clock approaches nobody will hear any speech made. The noble Lord, Earl Wemyss, spoke until a quarter to 8, and then adjourned the House, and the next day the Earl of Dunraven spoke, and in that way two whole evenings were taken up. I had come up myself on this very Bill as to the Duration of Speeches being the first in the Order of the Day, and I desired to speak, but the noble Lord the Secretary of the Colonies came and told me I was quite wrong. I really wish that the speeches might begin later and be carried on in a more uniform manner. I beg to put myself in the hands of the House, and I am entirely at their mercy.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I do not know whether it is necessary to go into the noble Lord's defence of his Bill. It certainly shows the working of a very sensitive conscience that he should bring in a Bill against the length of speeches, and I can only hope that he may be successful, at all events, if not in this Chamber, in "another place." But I do not believe that any other person has found the Debates in this House too long. The real point to which the noble Lord directs our attention is one affecting the position of the Clerk at the Table, and it is one which is rather interesting to this House, because it raises a constitutional difficulty. The noble Lord put down on the Paper a Motion for taking up the Bill at an earlier period than 10 months. There is no doubt that in the other House the Speaker would not have allowed that Motion to appear, and if it had appeared he would not have put it to the House. But in this House we have such a traditional distrust of the nominee of the Crown, who sits on the Woolsack, that in order to preserve our independence we give him no power whatever. I have always thought that is a mistake, because it lands us in this difficulty: that we have nobody who has the duty of determining the business of our House. I really think in these circumstances it is impossible to find fault with the Clerk at the Table for removing Motions from the Paper which are obviously such as the Speaker of the House of Commons would not admit, and which the Lord Chancellor in this Chamber would not admit if he had the power that is possessed by the Speaker of the House of Commons. It is an anomalous way of arriving at the result, but I think the Clerk at the Table did what was quite right in removing the notice from the Notice Paper.

*Lord DENMAN: I merely wish to ask the House if I may put a Motion upon the Paper for next Session to rescind the Order for putting off the Second Reading of this Bill for so long a period as 10 months?

The Marquess of SALISBURY: Next Session? Oh, certainly.

*Lord DENMAN: Then I may put a notice on the Paper that this Resolution for the Second Reading at the end of 10 months be rescinded?

The LORD CHANCELLOR: The noble Lord must give Notice of Motion.

The Marquess of SALISBURY: The noble Lord is entitled to give notice of what he likes by word of mouth, but, of course, if it is out of Order the House will not proceed to the consideration of it. I apprehend if it is grossly out of Order the noble Lord is not entitled to have it put upon the Notice Paper.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: I quite agree with what the noble Marquess has said upon the subject of the noble Lord's Motion.

SEIZURE OF A BRITISH SHIP BY THE PORTUGUESE IN AFRICA.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

The Earl of KIMBERLEY: I wish to ask the noble Marquess whether he has any information as to the reported seizure of an English steamer by the Portuguese Authorities in South Africa?

The Marquess of SALISBURY: The transition from the last subject is severe. We have no information other than is before the public, and well known. The circumstances which are most required to be known in order to judge of the character of the act of the Portuguese are not known to us yet. As far as I can see, if the ship was engaged in landing arms in territory which is undoubtedly Portuguese, the Portuguese had a right to arrest the ship if smuggling. But if the ship as stated in one account, was simply coming down the river, I doubt very much whether any ground for arresting her on the part of the Portuguese can be shown. But we must inquire into the circumstances more thoroughly before we can express any opinion upon the question.

House adjourned at ten minutes before Six o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 16th March, 1891.

RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS.

Resolution of the House relative to Railway Rates and Charges Provisional Order Bills [6th March], which was ordered to be communicated to the Lords, and Message from the Lords [10th March], signifying their concurrence in the said Resolution, read.

Ordered, That the following Bills be committed to a Select Committee of Five Members, nominated by the Committee of Selection, to be joined with a Committee of Five Lords :—

Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.
Great Northern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.
Great Western Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.
London and North Western Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.

London and South Western Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.

London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.

London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.

Midland Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.

South Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That all Petitions in favour or against the Bills or Orders scheduled thereto presented five clear days before the meeting of the Committee be referred to the Committee; that the Petitioners praying to be heard by themselves, their Counsel, or Agents be heard in favour of or against the Bills, and Counsel heard in support of the Bills.

Ordered, That a Message be sent to the Lords, to acquaint their Lordships that the said Bills have been committed to Five Members of this House, to be joined with a Committee of Five Lords, pursuant to the Resolution of the House relative to Provisional Orders Confirmation (Rates and Charges) Bill of the 6th day of March last, and to the Message of the 10th day of March, signifying their concurrence in the said Resolution."—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

QUESTIONS.

THE OPIUM TRADE.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to a Petition to Parliament on the subject of the opium trade, signed by over 11,000 Chinese residents of Singapore, wherein they pray of the British Administration

> "Not to ruin them morally, physically, and materially, by affording facilities for carrying on the traffic in this most pernicious drug";

and whether he can state if nearly half the Revenue of Singapore is derived from the opium traffic?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): My attention has not been drawn to any Petition on the subject of the opium trade signed by Chinese residents of Singapore complaining of the facilities afforded to the trade. In reply to the last question of the hon. Member, I may say that the Excise on opium in Singapore produces more than one-half of the total Revenue of the colony.

THE INDIAN FACTORY BILL.

SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India if it is true, as stated in the *Times* of 11th March, that the Secretary of State has intimated to the Indian Government that certain parts of the Factory Bill, submitted by them to the Indian Legislative Council—

> "Would be contrary to pledges given in the Imperial Parliament, and could not be accepted;"

if so, when and to whom those pledges were given; (2) whether, since the Despatches of May and July, 1890, the Secretary of State has been in further communication with the Viceroy regarding the Factory Act; and (3) whether, now that the communications have resulted in a Bill, he will lay the further Correspondence upon the Table?

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Sir J. GORST, Chatham): In answer to the first paragraph of the hon. Member's question, I have to say that the statements made in Parliament by the First Lord of the Treasury regarding the Indian Factory Bill, which are, I presume, referred to in the question, have not formed the subject of communication by the Secretary of State to the Government of India. The answer to the second paragraph is in the affirmative. The reply to the third paragraph is that the presentation of further correspondence will be considered by the Secretary of State as soon as the new Indian Factory Act is received.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: In regard to the reply of the right hon. Gentleman to the first part of the question, may I point out that the Under Secretary has given me an answer to a question which I did not ask, while he has not answered the question which I did ask? Is the right hon. Gentleman aware, as stated in the *Times* of the 11th of March, that the Secretary of State has intimated to the Indian Government that certain parts of the Factory Bill, submitted by them to the Indian Legislative Council, is contrary to pledges given in the Imperial Parliament, and cannot be accepted; and, if so, when, and to whom those pledges were given?

*SIR J. GORST: The hon. Member, I presume, has been in his place in this

House, and must have heard the answers of the First Lord of the Treasury to the various Members who have put questions to him, and he must therefore know whether any pledges have been given. I have said that there has been no correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Government of India in reference to any pledges which have been given in the Imperial Parliament.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Is it true, as stated in the *Times*, that certain parts of the Bill submitted to the Indian Council are contrary to the pledges given in the Imperial Parliament? I ask whether that is true or is not true?

[No answer was returned.]

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I beg to give notice that I will put the question down for to-morrow.

THE BOMBAY SALT ACT.

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India (1) whether manufacture of salt is defined in the Bombay Salt Act, under which two native women were recently convicted and punished, to be not merely the preparation of salt for trade purposes, but "every process for the purification or refinement of salt;" (2) is he aware that it is by the process of evaporation over fire, which the Definition Clause of the Act defines to be manufacture, that the dirty bazaar salt is prepared for table use; (3) is he aware that the salt, for the treatment of which by the above process the women were punished, had already paid duty; (4) whether the cases were referred by the District Magistrate to the High Court in order to ascertain if there was any way of escape from the hard and fast definition and prohibition contained in the Act; that Justices Birdwood and Parsons found that there was not; and that Mr. Justice Birdwood declared that the definition of manufacture in the Act

> "Would apparently convert into crimes some perfectly innocent practices connected with the use of salt for domestic purposes;"

(5) whether, in the face of so strong an expression of opinion by the learned Judge, he still adheres to his decision that the law shall continue to be enforced; and (6) whether he will cause a Return to be prepared, showing each case of alleged infraction of the Act, the nature of the offence, and the punishment inflicted?

*SIR J. GORST: The answer to the first paragraph of the question of the hon. Member is, Yes, and to the second, Yes. The reply to the third paragraph is that the newspaper report of the High Court decision states that the salt was not alleged to be contraband. The answer to the fourth paragraph is that the words quoted occur in the newspaper report. In reply to paragraph five, I have to say that the law will be enforced with discretion, and, if it is found necessary, will be amended. The answer to the last paragraph of the question is that if the hon. Member will consult the Bombay Annual Salt Report he will find there an account of salt prosecutions and the result thereof.

MR. CONYBEARE: Do I understand that the right hon. Gentleman controverts the accuracy of the report of Mr. Justice Birdwood's statement that the definition of the manufacture of salt in the Act

> "Would apparently convert into crimes some perfectly innocent practices connected with the use of salt for domestic purposes."

*SIR J. GORST: No, Sir; I said that the Secretary of State had received no official communication in regard to this trial, but that the words quoted by the hon. Member do appear in the newspaper report.

THE PUNJAB—LAND REVENUE.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the official, since dead, to whose mistake, in refusing to suspend a part of the Land Revenue in Gurgaon in 1877, he has publicly attributed the losses of human life and cattle during the years 1877 and 1882, and the great indebtedness then incurred, was Mr. Gore Ouseley, then Financial Commissioner of the Punjab; (2) whether, in the year 1877, a circular was issued by the Government of India from Simla, commanding that as large a proportion as might be possible of the revenues were to be collected; (3) whether Mr. Gore Ouseley was bound to obey that Circular; and, if so, why he is to be held more to blame for the disaster than his superior officers; (4) whether he is aware that the prevention of similar mistakes for the future in the

Gurgaon District depends not upon the general Famine Codes, as stated by him on 18th February last, but on the terms of a Resolution, referred to by Sir James Lyall in his Orders on the Gurgaon Settlement, in which it is stated that the full revenue of insecure tracts shall not be realised in years of severe and long-continued drought; and (5) what security exists that this Resolution will not be set aside if (as was the case in 1877) Imperial necessities forbid a relaxation?

*SIR J. GORST: In reply to the first question of the hon. Member, I have to say that the Secretary of State respectfully declines to give the name of the deceased officer. The answer to paragraph 2 is that no such circular can be traced. In regard to paragraph 3, officers are bound to obey general orders unless special circumstances justify a departure. As to paragraph 4, my answer on the 18th of February last was correct; and the reply to the last question of the hon. Member is, that the securities which exist are the vigilance of the Government of India, of the Secretary of State in Council, and of the Imperial Parliament.

ABDUL RASOUL.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India (1) whether Abdul Rasoul was arrested at Bombay in consequence of communications received from the Indian Office by the Commissioner of Police at Bombay; (2) what action on the part of Rasoul prior to his arrival in Bombay led the India Office to forward instructions for his arrest; (3) for how long a period had Rasoul been an object of suspicion to the India House authorities, and on what grounds was such suspicion based; (4) is it the fact that Rasoul was escorted from the gaol at Assirgad on board the Peninsular and Oriental steamer *Assam* by a sergeant of police and seven constables, and his passage paid for him; (5) what further information, or action on the part of Rasoul, has led the India House authorities to the conclusion that Rasoul is now neither a danger to the Empire nor an object of suspicion; (6) and did any, and what, communications pass between the India Office and the Viceroy, in consequence of which the latter telegraphed to the Chief Commissioner of Police at Bombay that he was to send back Rasoul to London?

*SIR J. GORST: The answer to the first question is in the negative; the second and third, therefore, fall to the ground. The reply to the fourth question is, that the Secretary of State has no information about Abdul Rasoul's journey from Assirgad to the Peninsular and Oriental steamer. His passage was paid for him by the Government. In answer to the fifth paragraph of the question, I have to say that the Secretary of State has received no fresh information about Abdul Rasoul; but this answer must not be taken as admitting the conclusion attributed to him in the question. In reply to the sixth paragraph of the question, my answer is that no such communication passed.

MR. CONYBEARE: I understand that Abdul Rasoul has been interviewed by the authorities of India. If that is so, is the right hon. Gentleman still under the impression whether or not he was escorted from the North-West Provinces to Bombay by the police. Was it not a police escort that brought him down from Assirgad to Bombay; and, if so, I want to know, in spite of any statement to the contrary, whether the Government intend to maintain that Abdul Rasoul came to England at his own express wish, and not against his wish.

*SIR J. GORST: That is exactly the point on which the Secretary of State has no official information. He does not know how Abdul Rasoul came except that he came by steamer. There is no doubt that Abdul Rasoul did ask to be sent to England.

MR. CONYBEARE: Abdul Rasoul says that he did not demand an escort. I think it would save the time of the House if the right hon. Gentleman will make inquiry upon these points, because I shall have to repeat the question until I get a satisfactory answer. Will the right hon. Gentleman do his best to obtain the information?

[No answer was returned.]

THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES O OUDH.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India what remissions, if any, were made by the

Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Province of Oudh to the State tenants in 1877-8, when the average price of food was more than one-third higher than the average of the six preceding years; and whether he can state how far there is any connection between the high prices ruling in 1887-8 and the fact that the recorded death-rate in India in that year was the highest known?

*Sir J. GORST: The answer to the first question is that the remissions in 1877–8 were 214,315 rupees. At the end of the year 282,000 rupees were held over uncollected, of which 104,563 rupees were eventually remitted. In reply to the second question, I have to say that the connection between high prices and high death-rate must be a matter of opinion. The high death-rate of 1887–8 was chiefly caused by cholera and fever.

SHIPMENT OF INCOMPETENT SEAMEN.

Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been called to the illegal shipment of incompetent seamen as A.B.'s at the Port of Cardiff, as appears from the statement of R. Phillips and others, reported in the *South Wales Daily News* of 25th February, and also by the statement taken from the said R. Phillips and others by the Superintendent of Mercantile Marine at Cardiff; if he is aware of the fact that the men referred to, although incompetent and inexperienced, were signed on as A.B.'s in the presence of an official of the Board of Trade; if he is aware that the men so signed on as A.B.'s were brought to the ship by a person who is not licensed to ship seamen in accordance with Sec. 147, sub-Sec. (1), of "The Merchant Shipping Act, 1854"; and if these statements are true, whether he can take any steps to prevent the recurrence of these irregularities and to secure compliance with the law?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): Yes, Sir; my attention has been called to the statements in the question, which are substantially accurate. I am, however, informed that prosecutions were instituted against those persons who supplied the seamen illegally, and that, in two cases, convictions were obtained.

RIFLE RANGES.

Captain PENTON (Finsbury, Central) I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the acknowledged deficiency of rifle ranges accessible to Metropolitan Volunteer Regiments, his attention has been called to the fact that a company has been formed with the object of establishing rifle ranges available for Metropolitan and other corps near Staines, and whether the scheme has his sanction or approval?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): My attention has been called to the project of forming a company to establish rifle ranges near Staines, and I have expressed strong approval of the objects of the company.

SOUTH KENSINGTON MUSEUM.

Mr. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works when he will be prepared to give the names of the judges and assessor of the South Kensington Museum completion competition; whether he is aware that the plans and elevations supplied to the competing architects contain no drawing or indication of the Central Quadrangle, with its important surrounding façades, which furnish the keynote of the style of the present buildings which the proposed competition is to complete, and whether he would be willing to arrange for all the competing architects to be taken over the present buildings and have the details explained to them, especially the exterior terra cotta enrichments and earthenware mosaics, by the officials of the Board of Works and of the Science and Art Department?

The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, Dublin University): A course somewhat similar to that adopted in the case of the last important competition for Government buildings will probably be adopted in that for the South Kensington Museum competition; in that case the judges were for the most part Members of the Government of the Day, chosen for the purpose, and were assisted by professional assessors. Mr. Waterhouse, President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, has undertaken to act as assessor on this occasion. No competing architects have been invited to visit and inspect the existing buildings, and of course every facility will be afforded them in obtaining any information they may require. In Class 3 of the Conditions and Instructions which we have issued to the architects it is laid down that the designs shall "pay regard so far as may be necessary to the style of the existing buildings," and beyond this it would, in my opinion, be very unwise to fetter the competitors.

LONDON WATER SUPPLY.

MR. LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he has seen Professor Frankland's Report, stating that during the month of February the water abstracted from the Thames by the Chelsea, West Middlesex, Southwark, Grand Junction, and Lambeth Companies was, in all cases, of very inferior quality, being polluted by an abnormal amount of vegetable organic matter, that supplied by the Grand Junction Company on the 5th February surpassing in respect of organic impurity any sample of Thames water examined by Professor Frankland during the last quarter of a century, being opalescent from imperfect filtration, and not in a fit state for dietetic use; whether he has further observed that Dr. Koch's process of examination applied to the water supplied in the different Metropolitan districts showed the existence of "microbes" in the respective ratios of Kent 20, New River 74, West Middlesex 104, Chelsea 144, Grand Junction 220, East London 248, Lambeth 284, and Southwark 356; whether the Reports from the Officers of Health show that there is any correspondence between the condition of the water supplied and the amount of sickness in those districts; and whether, if the existence of "microbes" in water for drinking and culinary purposes is found to be pernicious and injurious to the public health, the medical officers of the Local Government Board are able to recommend any effectual method either of extracting or counteracting them?

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): My attention has been drawn to the Report to which the hon. Member alludes. With regard to the analysis of the water supplied by the Grand Junction Water Company on the 5th of February, I recently stated the facts very fully in reply to a question of the hon. Member for the Knutsford Division of Cheshire. As to the analysis of the water supplied at a later date in the same month by other Metropolitan Water Companies, I have no doubt that the abnormal amount of vegetable matter, although much less than was the case with the water from the Grand Junction Water Company on the 5th February, was occasioned by similar causes. Dr. Frankland informs me that the exceptionally impure condition of the river-derived waters supplied to the Metropolis in February has now passed away, and that these waters have apparently returned to a condition approaching the normal at this season. I have communicated with Dr. Frankland with regard to his statements as to the existence of microbes. He states that the number was not large for filtered river water, and that as no pathogenic organism was observed among the microbes, their presence does not afford any ground for alarm. The Board have not received any Report from Medical Officers of Health, showing that there is any such correspondence as is suggested in the question.

*MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): I wish to put a question to the right hon. Gentleman, which arises out of the answer he has just given, namely, whether it does not appear from Dr. Frankland's Report of February that the water supplied to Glasgow and Birmingham during that month was inferior to that usually supplied to those places?

*MR. RITCHIE: I am afraid that that is a question I cannot answer without notice.

THE HOME AND FOREIGN OFFICES.

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why sentries are posted outside the Home Office and the Foreign Office?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: It has always been customary to post a sentry in front of certain important Government Offices, and its utility has been proved upon more than one occasion.

MAGAZINE RIFLE SIGHTS.

MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, with reference to the magazine rifle, why it has been decided to abandon the sights invented by Lieutenant Colonel Lewes, and revert to the old barleycorn sights; whether the Lewes sight was adopted because it enables fire to be kept low in the shock of rapid volleys; whether, with this sight, recruits are much more quickly taught to become effective shots; whether the Lewes sights were incorrectly marked, in consequence of having been calculated for the strength of a powder not yet issued; and whether he will therefore have a portion of the Mark II. rifles fitted with Lewes sights, with elevations correctly marked for the ammunition now in use, so that a fair estimate of their value may be obtained?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The Lewes sight was abandoned at the suggestion of the Committee on the Magazine Rifle after much practical experiment. It was found that the foresight was liable to injury, and difficult to repair if injured. The soldiers preferred the barleycorn sight, and the Naval Authorities distinctly objected to the Lewes. Seeing the importance of uniformity for all Services, and bearing in mind that the Lewes sight gave no decided superiority in firing, it was thought best to revert to the system which had given satisfaction with the Martini-Henry rifle. I am not prepared to go back on this decision.

PAUPER EMIGRATION TO THE COLONIES.

MR. S. SMITH: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he can state the number of pauper children emigrated to the Colonies during the last 12 months; and whether the modification of the rules laid down by the Local Government Board in 1887 has perceptibly affected the progress of the movement?

*MR. RITCHIE: The number of orphan and deserted children who were sent to Canada by Boards of Guardians during the year ended 31st December, 1890, was 375. In the year preceding the revision of the conditions of emigration, the number of pauper children sent to Canada was 166. The year 1890 shows an increase of 209 on that number.

CIVIL SERVICE WRITERS.

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the system of appointing persons to posts on the Civil Service, to be paid out of allowances for clerical assistance granted to Heads of Departments, is intended to apply to only such posts as should be held by Civil Service Writers, and to cases of meeting emergencies, or whether it is intended to appoint persons, without their having first passed an examination, and the usual inquiries having been made with reference to them by the Civil Service Commissioners, as accountants, and to other staff posts which, according to the recommendations of the Civil Establishments Commission, were to be reserved for the best clerks of the Second Division?

*THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I think that my hon. Friend will see on consideration that it is not possible for me to give an answer to his question determining what will be the policy of the Treasury in the future; but I shall be quite ready to answer any question of fact in particular cases.

COMMUTATION OF PENSIONS.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any of the proposals contained in the Treasury Minute of 15th July last have yet been carried out as to the commuting by cash payments the pensions named therein; if so, will he state what payments have been made?

*MR. JACKSON: Yes, Sir; two of the proposals made in the Minute of July 15 last have been carried out, and payments have been made to the Paymaster General of the Supreme Court *ex parte* the Duke of St. Albans and the Marquess of Downshire.

SEVERE SENTENCE.

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the case of a man named Edwards, who was sentenced at the Surrey Sessions in 1888 to 14 years' penal servitude for stealing a small quantity of spirits, valued at 2s. 9d.; and, if not, whether he will have an inquiry made, with a view to reducing the sentence or granting the man (who still asserts his innocence) a pardon for the remainder of the sentence?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Yes, Sir; this case was considered by me in 1888, and I then decided that the sentence might be treated as one of seven years, which will allow of the convict's release, if his conduct is good, after five years and five months. Though the embezzlements were petty, they were extensive and systematic, and the man's record was a bad one, he having been four times previously convicted—once of forgery, when he was sentenced to five years' penal servitude.

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS AT MORPETH.

MR. BURT (Morpeth): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to the inconvenience caused to Mr. Tweedy, farmer, and others, of Heighly Farm, Morpeth, through the non-delivery of letters; and whether anything can be done to remedy the grievances complained of?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): I quite appreciate the inconvenience to which the hon. Member calls attention. But the postal service in the locality is already carried on at a heavy loss, and I should scarcely be warranted in effecting improvements at still further outlay. If the persons immediately concerned would arrange to have their letters taken charge of at a house within the official delivery, some, at least, of the inconvenience now felt would be remedied.

MAIN ROADS AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT.

MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board how many and which Quarter Sessions boroughs have appealed to the Local Government Board (under "The Local Government Act, 1888," sections 35 and 38) from decisions of the County Council with respect to the declaration of highways to be main roads, and how many and which of these appeals have been decided; what are the guiding principles upon which such decisions have been founded; in how many and in which cases is the result of the appeal to establish connecting links within the boundaries of the borough between the different main roads converging upon that borough; and in how many and in which cases does the arbitration of the Local Government Board leave the said boroughs without any main road leading to the railway station, or to the harbour (in case of a sea port), or to the market place, or to any place which may be regarded as the business centre of the borough?

*MR. RITCHIE: The Local Government Board have received appeals under the Local Government Act from nine Quarter Sessions boroughs. They have given their decision in the case of Dover, Carlisle, Grantham, Scarborough and Banbury. With regard to the principles on which the Board base their decisions, and the details of the several decisions at which the Board have arrived, I can only state generally that, before coming to a decision, there has in each case been a local inquiry by one of the Inspectors of the Board, the representatives of the borough and of the county have had full opportunity of submitting at the Inquiry any representations which they deemed necessary, and the decision of the Board has been given after full consideration of the circumstances of each case.

MR. ROWNTREE: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the last paragraph of the question.

MR. RITCHIE: No, Sir; there are details into which I cannot enter as to the decision of the Local Government Board. They are reserved for future inquiry, and I do not think it would be convenient that I should state in this House all the decisions we have reserved for future consideration.

MR. ROWNTREE: Persons feeling themselves aggrieved can have recourse to a local inquiry, and in that case would it be inconvenient for the Local Government Board to give reasons for their decision. If so, what remedy can the right hon. Gentleman suggest?

*MR. RITCHIE: I am afraid there is no remedy after the Local Government Board has come to a decision and issued an Order. There are no means by which the question can be re-considered.

Mr. ROWNTREE: I will call attention to this matter on the Estimates.

SHEBEENS IN WHITECHAPEL.

Mr. ROWNTREE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is correct, as stated by Mr. Roberts, Secretary to the East London Licensed Victuallers' and Beersellers' Association, in a letter to the *Morning Advertiser* of 11th March, that it is "a notorious fact" that the Whitechapel district

> "Abounds in shebeens and bogus clubs where intoxicating liquors (generally of a most inferior quality) may be obtained at all hours;"

how many persons have been proceeded against in the Whitechapel Police District during the past year for keeping such places, and with what results; and whether, if it is the case that such places abound, he will instruct the police to take more active steps for their suppression?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Commissioner of Police that there are in all 20 clubs, established for various objects, in the Whitechapel district, but it is not within the knowledge of the police that these are bogus clubs. It has, however, come to the knowledge of the police that intoxicating liquor was being sold at private houses in this district, and special observation has been kept, with the result that proceedings were taken during the past year against 15 persons for illegally selling intoxicating liquors, and convictions followed. In addition to this, 26 persons who were found on such premises were summoned and convicted. I have called the attention of the Commissioner to the hon. Member's question; but I have no reason to believe that the police are otherwise than vigilant in the exercise of this particular duty.

POST OFFICE OFFICIALS AND POLITICS.

Mr. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that, on a bill advertising a meeting of Parliamentary electors at Sunbury on the 11th instant, and addressed by the honourable Member for the Uxbridge Division of Middlesex, and other Conservative Members of Parliament, it was announced that tickets for reserved seats might be obtained on payment of 1s. each from Mr. Trotter, Post Office, Sunbury Common; and whether it is in accordance with the regulations of the Service that postal officials and premises should be used for the advantage of a political party?

*Mr. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that I am aware that no such meeting as he mentions was addressed by the hon. Member for Uxbridge Division and other Conservative Members, and that in matter of fact no such meeting took place at all. The Sub-Postmaster of Sunbury Common assures me that his name was inserted in the Bill to which the hon. Member refers without his knowledge or consent. The Bill was not exhibited in the Post Office, but in the Sub-Postmaster's shop.

THE SILKSWORTH EVICTIONS.

Mr. GOURLEY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if it is correct that on the last meeting the two working men who are members of the Joint Committee of the Durham County Council desired to raise a question as to the conduct of the police at Silksworth, and whether the rest of the members rose and left them unable to form a quorum; whether up to date a single person has been arrested, or charged, or summoned by the police for throwing stones, earth, or any other missile on the occasion of the recent baton charge; and how many police were present on that occasion?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The Vice Chairman on the occasion in question is abroad, so that I have not been able to obtain the information from him; but I am informed by the chief constable that one of the members of the Committee made some remarks on the conduct of some of the policemen at Silksworth, referring to a quarrel between three constables in their lodgings. The reply given was that, this being a question of discipline, it had already been disposed of by the chief constable. The conduct of the police in relation to the strike at Silksworth was in no way impugned. Some further questions were also asked and answered as to the number, lodging, and expense of the police at Silksworth.

There was a full quorum of the members of the Committee present until the business before it was concluded. No person has been arrested, charged, or summoned in connection with the *mêlée* on the 25th of February. The missiles came from all parts of a tumultuous crowd, most of whom were strangers to Silksworth. The number of constabulary of all ranks was about 150, of whom 45 took part in the charge.

LIGHT DUES.

Mr. ATKINSON (Boston): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he will let the Committee on the Incidence of Light Dues meet, without any longer seeking to bind the shipowning members to give up their conviction that light dues should fall on the Consolidated Fund, in accordance with the recommendation of Select Committees of this House?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: The Committee to which the hon. Member refers was instituted on the suggestion that a Committee on which the shipping interest should be represented should be appointed to consider the incidence of the present system of light dues and the possibility of substituting a tax on shipping for them. If the shipowners insist, as I understand they do, on the justice of these matters being paid for out of the Consolidated Fund, I do not see that such a Committee would serve any useful purpose.

BANKING RESERVES.

Mr. ATKINSON: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he intends to introduce a new clause into the Savings Bank Bill, by which he will set an example of providing banking reserves in the proportion which he considers necessary, in face of the fact that his liabilities to the public alone for deposits amount to over £112,000,000?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): No, Sir; I have no such object. The question of my hon. Friend assumes an analogy between the deposits in the hands of bankers and those in the hands of the National Debt Commissioners. I should be prepared at the proper time to show the fallacy involved in the view that such an analogy exists.

EVENING ATTENDANCE AT NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

Mr. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury what has been the number of persons attending the British Museum during the evenings since the trustees opened it to the public; and what has been the average attendance after 6 o'clock p.m. in this and other National Institutions?

*Mr. JACKSON: The total number of persons who have attended the British Museum during the evening since the evening opening was established in February, 1890, is 73,412—average per evening, 264. From February, 1890, to December, 1890, there was an almost unbroken decline from a monthly average per evening of 635 to an average of 90; the average for January and February of this year has been 120 and 160 respectively.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOLS.

Mr. LAWSON: I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther) whether the Charity Commissioners are aware that the governing body of St. Paul's Schools have not yet carried out Clause 35 (1) of the Scheme under which they are appointed, by having a modern department for about 500 boys; and whether they are aware that the present building and grounds cost nearly £150,000 for 1,000 boys, and were provided to give effect to the provisions of the scheme of this trust and charity—a classical department for about 500 boys, and a modern department for about 500 boys; whether the Charity Commissioners have sanctioned the action of the governing body in acquiring a site of about 4a. 2r. 20p. in West Kensington, Fulham, for erecting a school for 400 girls under the said scheme, before they have provided a modern department, for which the present expensive building was erected; and whether the cost of such site, having no frontage, is £15,250, or nearly £3,300 an acre, whereas building land in Fulham, with frontages, and ripe for building purposes, can be easily obtained for about £1,500 an acre; and whether the Charity Commissioners will intervene to prevent this expenditure of charity money?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): The Charity Commissioners have received complaints that Clause 35 (1) of the Scheme for St. Paul's Schools has not been carried out, and are in communication with the governors on the subject, whose final explanation they have not yet received. The order of priority in which the various schools and departments to be maintained under the scheme are to be established is, by the scheme itself, directed to be such as the governors may deem most expedient. The Commissioners have before them an application from the governors to purchase the site in question, but before sanctioning the purchase they have required to be furnished with satisfactory evidence of the value of the site.

IMPERIAL DEFENCES.

SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies what was the date of the communication, referred to by the Auditor General in his Report on the Imperial Defence Act, addressed by the Colonial Office to the Government of Queensland, respecting the non-ratification of the Australasian Agreement by that Government; whether any remonstrance or representations on this subject have been made to the Government of Queensland by any of the other Australasian Colonies who were parties to and who have ratified the said Agreement; and whether the correspondence will be presented to the House?

BARON H. DE WORMS: A Despatch was, on October 31st last, addressed to Queensland and the other colonies concerned. The Secretary of State is not aware whether any representations have been made to Queensland by the other colonies. It seems hardly worth while to print the Circular Despatch of October 31st, but a copy of it shall be furnished to my hon. Friend.

GRANTS TO VOLUNTEERS.

MR. AINSLIE (Lancashire, N. Lonsdale): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can explain on what grounds the grant of 12s. per efficient Volunteer is held to be enough for the provision of the equipments required under the regulations in the cases of country battalions; if he is aware that the lowest charge at which these equipments are procurable is 18s.; if he can make a distinction in favour of battalions whose detachments are widely scattered; if he is aware that the regulation which limits this grant of 12s. to efficients on the previous October will adversely affect those corps which were below their strength at that time; if also, in the case of the Volunteer Artillery the grant of 5s. has been found wholly insufficient, and, without including valises, does the required equipment cost fully 11s. 6d. per man; and if he can make a substantial increase upon the allowances alluded to?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The special grant for the equipment of the Volunteers was intended to complete their equipment with which they were already partially supplied, and not to completely re-equip the Force. As regards the Infantry Volunteers, the articles deficient were taken to be braces, pouch, mess-tin, haversack, water-bottle, and carrier. These it was estimated last year could be obtained for 12s. A rise in prices has since taken place, and the sums are somewhat insufficient. Accordingly, the grant of 12s. will be increased to 15s. for those corps which wear buff, and to 13s. for those whose accoutrements are black or brown. As regards Artillery Corps, they were understood to be already in possession of a waist-belt and pouch, a frog, and a sling. The remaining equipment can, it is known, be obtained for 5s. Consequently it is not intended to increase that amount. Great-coats will, in many cases, be issued in kind, to the advantage of corps concerned. The grant of 30s. sanctioned for all future cases of increase of establishment will be made retrospective to April 1st, 1890.

JOINT STOCK BANKS.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.); I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his proposals for a more frequent publication of the accounts of Joint Stock Banks are confined to the London Banks, or whether they extend to all the Joint Stock Banks in the United Kingdom?

MR. GOSCHEN: My appeal for more frequent publication of the accounts of Joint Stock Banks was made without any distinction as to the locality of the banks; but I mainly had the London banks in view. I am glad to say that I have every reason to believe that the London Joint Stock Banks will consent to monthly publication. With regard to the country Joint Stock Banks, I understand, though they have the matter still under consideration, that they are in general reluctant to adopt a monthly publication, but would consent to a quarterly publication instead of half-yearly publication as at present in vogue.

Mr. H. H. FOWLER: I am informed that the action of the London banks will rather depend on what the country banks propose to do.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I understand that the London Joint Stock Banks have practically agreed to a monthly publication, subject to their agreeing on the particular form of account.

Mr. ATKINSON: May I ask whether the country banks have not unanimously decided for a three-monthly publication?

Mr. GOSCHEN: I understand that that was the recommendation of the Committee, but the country Joint Stock Banks themselves have still to be called together with reference to the final conclusion.

SECOND CLASS TELEGRAPHISTS.

Mr. NEVILLE (Liverpool, Exchange): I beg to ask the Postmaster General when his promise of increase of salary to the second class telegraphists, given in July last, is to come into operation in Liverpool; whether such clerks in Liverpool have been ordered to refund payments made to them on the faith of such promise; and whether the increment has already been granted to clerks in some towns; and, if so, why these towns are preferred to Liverpool?

*Mr. RAIKES: I am not aware of such a promise as that alluded to by the hon. Member. In July last I promulgated the scheme sanctioned by the Treasury, which changed the annual increment of second class male telegraphists throughout the Post Office Service from 1s. 6d. to 2s. a week. In order to do this it was necessary to fix a common date from which the new scale giving the new increment should commence, and to adjust the sums payable under the old system up to that date. I believe that in some few instances this rule was not properly observed, with the result that some incorrect payments amounting to a few pence had to be adjusted. I am not aware that the course indicated in the last part of the question has been adopted in any instance. The method of adjustment followed at Liverpool was adopted in every case in the application of the improved scales, and was in accordance with the Treasury Rules on the subject.

THE CENSUS.

Mr. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board what steps will be taken in the coming Census to secure the enumeration of persons in London who will not be returned as having slept in any dwelling house or lodging house, but who may spend the night in the streets or in places not likely to come under the notice of the enumerators?

*Mr. RITCHIE: The Instructions to the enumerators require them to take an account, so far as possible, of any persons who may have been in their district during the night of the Census, although they may not have slept in any house. The period of the year makes it very improbable that any large number of houseless persons will be passing the night in the streets on the night in question.

Mr. CAUSTON: What is the nature of the information those persons will be called on to give the enumerators?

*Mr. RITCHIE: I presume the enumerators will ascertain as far as they can the same information from people in the streets as from people in houses.

SCOTCH SCHOOL BOARDS.

Mr. SHIRESS WILL (Montrose, &c.) I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether in view of the triennial elections of School Boards in Scotland now commencing, he can give the House any information as to the duties of returning officers at such elections; whether, looking to Section 53 of "The Elections (Scotland) Corrupt and Illegal Practices Act, 1890," repealing the 14th section of "The Elementary Education (Scotland) Act, 1872," it is now the duty of the returning officer (or of any and what other authority) at such elections, in every case of equality of votes, to determine which candidate is to be deemed duly elected; whether, looking to the repeal aforesaid, there is now any authority (under the existing provisions of the Education Acts affecting Scotland) for returning officers to hold or declare the candidates having the majority of votes duly elected, or to determine in every case of equality of votes which candidate is to be deemed duly elected, as was the law under the Act of 1872; if the 14th section of "The Elementary Education (Scotland) Act, 1872," is to any extent repealed, what are the duties of returning officers in relation to the matters above referred to; and whether any and what subsequent legislation takes the place of the directions given to returning officers in the Act of 1872?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The duties of Returning Officers at School Board Elections are prescribed by the General Order of October, 1890, issued by the Scotch Education Department in virtue of the powers conferred on the Department under the Education Acts. Paragraph 20 of that Order provides for the case of an equality of votes. The Returning Officer is also, in pursuance of Paragraph 21, to make a return of the result of the poll and of the names, with place of abode and designation, of the persons elected, which must necessarily be based upon the number of votes obtained by the respective candidates.

THE LABOUR COMMISSION.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S:) I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in recommending to Her Majesty the names of persons to be appointed on the proposed Labour Commission, the Government will consider the desirability of placing on the Commission one or more women, having regard both to the large extent to which working women and their trade organisations are interested in any amendments of the laws relating to labour which may be suggested, and also to the fact that some of the questions likely to be dealt with by the Commission affect working women and children in a special and peculiar way?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The Government have very carefully considered this question, and they have come to the conclusion that, on the whole, it is not advisable that women should be placed upon the Commission. All interests will doubtless be fully represented before the Commission.

MR. BRYCE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether his answer must be regarded as final, or whether it will be of any use to bring before the Government further evidence in the matter?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes, Sir; I think my answer must be regarded as final.

POACHING CASE.

MR. CONYBEARE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the following facts relating to the case of William Laycock, recently imprisoned for an alleged poaching offence by Hon. Harbord Harbord, at the North Walsham Petty Sessions; that Laycock was only served at 4 o'clock on a Monday afternoon with the summons requiring him to appear the following morning at 10.30; that, owing to this short interval, he was unable to obtain legal advice or secure the attendance of several witnesses material to his defence, and his application for an adjournment was refused; that the alleged offence was committed in Antingham Wood, which is within the jurisdiction of the Cromer Bench, and not of the North Walsham Bench; that the summons averred that Laycock was, "about the hour of 7," in a certain plantation, the property of Right Hon. Charles, Baron Suffield, which averment was found at the trial to have been altered to the defendant's disadvantage to "10 minutes past 7;" that the Hon. H. Harbord is the agent of Mr. Mundy (lessee of his brother, Lord Suffield), who prosecuted Laycock; and whether, having regard to the above facts, and to the fact that Laycock is an illiterate man, unable to read, he will advise a re-hearing of the case to enable him to be properly advised as to his defence, and to bring all his witnesses into Court?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Clerk to the Justices that the summons was served at 4 o'clock the day before the hearing. The question as to time of service was not raised before the

Bench, and no intimation was made by the defendant that he wished to procure legal assistance. Had he applied, an adjournment would undoubtedly have been granted for that purpose. The offence was committed within the jurisdiction of the North Walsham Bench. The summons averred that the offence took place about the hour of seven, and was not subsequently altered. I am informed that the Chairman is not the agent of the lessee. I have no power to order a re-hearing of the case. The man's imprisonment is now at an end.

THE MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

MR. JACOBY (Derbyshire, Mid) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in consideration of the very great interest taken, both in and outside the House, in the Mines (Eight Hours) Bill, he will move the suspension for Wednesday, 18th March, of the Standing Order which prevents the continuance of any Debate upon Opposed Business after 5.30 p.m. on Wednesdays?

*MR. W. H. SMITH : The Government have come to the conclusion that it would not be right to ask the House to suspend the Standing Order in this case. A great necessity should be made out for the suspension of the Standing Order on Wednesday, as the early rising on that day is a great relief to the strain on hon. Members and the officers of the House.

*MR. JACOBY : Is it not the fact that on Wednesday the 19th of June, and Wednesday the 3rd of July, the Standing Order was suspended?

*MR. W. H. SMITH : I have no doubt that the hon. Member is perfectly accurate in the statement he has made as to the suspension of the Standing Order.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS.

MR. WALTER M'LAREN (Cheshire, Crewe) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether with a view to prevent the waste of time caused by counts-out when Private Members' Motions are being discussed, the Government will consider the advisability of asking the House to alter the Standing Orders governing business on Tuesday nights so as to allow Private Members' Bills to take precedence of Motions, and on Friday nights, so as to allow more than one Division to be taken on Motions or Amendments on going into Committee of Supply?

*MR. W. H. SMITH : A strong case should be made out before any attempt is made to revise the Standing Orders of the House. At present I am not prepared to undertake that task.

PRISONERS' EXERCISE IN IRELAND.

DR. TANNER (Cork Co., Mid) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if there is any shed or open air shelter in Clonmel, Galway, Kilmainham, or Tullamore Gaols, where prisoners can take the two hours' exercise as required by the Irish Prison Rules?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.) : The General Prisons Board report that the prisons mentioned, in common with others, contain no exercise sheds, the exercise being given in the open air, but sheds are available there for shelter from showers should the necessity arise.

CONSTABULARY FORCE FUND.

SIR T. ESMÓNDE (Dublin Co., S.) : I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if the amount payable from the Constabulary Force Fund to the widow of a pensioner is calculated upon the amount of pay drawn by him while serving in the Force, and also upon the amount of pension drawn by him as a pensioner; if he is compelled to subscribe to the fund while serving in the Force; and whether if he does not subscribe when on pension his widow or his children have no claim upon the fund?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR : The amount payable from the Constabulary Force Fund to the widow of a pensioner is calculated upon the amount of pay drawn by him while serving, and (except in the case of pensioners who retired before April 1st, 1867) an addition is made in respect of the amount of pension drawn. All officers and men of the Force appointed prior to the Constabulary Act of 1883, are compelled by Statute to subscribe to the fund so long as they are actually serving. Subscription to the fund on the part of a pensioner is voluntary. It is the case that a married member of the Force must, in order to secure the existing claim of his wife or children against the fund, subscribe when on pension. The claim otherwise lapses.

IRISH RELIEF WORKS.

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the relief works are about to be commenced at last in the County Cavan; and whether he will include among those works the roads for which presentments were refused by the Grand Jury, owing to the promise of the Government to start relief works?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not, as yet, been able to obtain Reports on this question; but in regard to the last paragraph, I have to say that I would strongly advise any Grand Jury to construct the works which they think are required in a county without consulting the action the Government may think it necessary to take.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to the condition of a vast proportion of the population of the Gweedore district of Dunfanaghy Union; whether any part of Ireland can show a worse condition than is to be found in the Meenacladdy, Bloodyforeland, and Brinlack portions of this district; what measures he proposes for the relief of this misery; whether his attention has been called to the consequences that must result next year owing to the fact that no seed potatoes have been provided for the Gweedore district, and whether he purposes making provision to prevent the famine that must ensue next year if seed be not promptly provided now; and whether it is by any fault of the Poor Law Guardians of the district that no seed has been provided; and, if so, whether he can compel this Board of Guardians to perform their duty in this crisis, or whether he will take steps to save the people from the consequences of their neglect?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Careful attention is being paid to the condition of the Gweedore and other districts in the Dunfanaghy Union. Serious injury must undoubtedly result to the Gweedore people if they persist in their refusal to apply for seed potatoes. No blame appears to attach to the Board of Guardians in the matter. On the contrary, the Guardian who resides in the district had the necessary notices posted, detailing the steps to be taken to obtain a supply of seed; but not a single application was made. It is said that the parish priest, the Rev. James M'Fadden, has taken upon himself the responsibility of advising his people not to apply for any seed from the Guardians, and, if this be so, upon him must rest the responsibility for the results. The time within which seed potatoes may be obtained has been extended in this and certain other Unions up to April 2.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has considered the deep distress prevailing among the numerous small farmers in Kiltullagh and Ballinlough, in the Castlerea Union, County Roscommon; and what measures he proposes in order to afford them relief?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The condition of this district is engaging the attention of the Government.

In reply to Mr. HOWORTH (Salford, S.),

MR. A. J. BALFOUR said: For the general scheme of railway construction in Ireland the Government are, on the whole, responsible, and primarily, of course, the Irish Government. The work, however, has to be constructed and negotiations carried on with the Board of Works, who are not under the Irish Government. Those are not circumstances which, in the ordinary course, would lead to a successful prosecution of novel and arduous business; but the Board of Works, as a matter of fact, have shown the greatest zeal and energy in carrying out the instructions or recommendations which I have made to them, and not only am I personally, but the public also, under a deep debt of gratitude to the Board of Works for what they have done in the matter.

THE SEIZURE BY PORTUGAL OF A BRITISH VESSEL.

MR. BRYCE: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government are in a position to give the House any information, in addition to that which has appeared in the public Press, as to the seizure of a British vessel on the Limpopo River?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Information has been received from the Acting Governor of the Cape, and indirectly from the Consul at Delagoa Bay, that the steamer *Countess of Carnarvon* had been detained by a Portuguese in the Limpopo River on a charge of smuggling, and was being sent to Delagoa Bay. We do not know any more at present.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I beg to ask whether the Lower Limpopo traverses territory admitted to be Portuguese; whether, by the laws of the Portuguese Province of Mozambique, through which lower river flows, no vessel may import arms or ammunition, either into the Province or through the Province to the interior, without a licence; whether the *Countess of Carnarvon* had that licence; whether, before the vessel is condemned as prize, there will not have to be a condemnation by a tribunal, at which it will be open to the owner of the vessel to appear; whether there is any Convention or Treaty now in force by which the right is secured to Her Majesty's ships to import arms and ammunition by the Limpopo, or to navigate that river to the sea; whether the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has approved of the alleged concession to exercise power and sovereignty in Manicaland granted to the South Africa Company by Mutassa, and whether the Charter granted to that company does not preclude them from exercising such power and sovereignty in Manicaland until such approval is granted; whether Manicaland does not form part of the territory where it was agreed by the Convention of last November?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The lower waters of the Limpopo are in territory recognised to be Portuguese; the importation of arms and ammunition into the Province of Mozambique is prohibited; we are not aware of the circumstances in which the *Countess of Carnarvon* was seized, except that it was on a charge of smuggling. If detained on that ground only, legal proceedings would have to be taken, and we should suppose that the persons charged would have an opportunity of defending themselves. In a case of smuggling there is no question of "prize." There is no Convention at present entitling Her Majesty's subjects to import arms by the Limpopo. The Secretary of State has not approved of a concession to the South Africa Company to exercise power and sovereignty in Mutassa's country, nor is the company doing so. Mutassa is an independent Chief, and is still governing his own territory. He has granted concessions to the company, and with his consent their police are keeping order among their own people. Manicaland, until its frontiers are surveyed and defined, is a loose geographical expression; and it cannot be at present declared to what extent it is affected by the terms of the *modus vivendi.* The question of the importation of arms is separate, and is not affected by the *modus vivendi.* The company's agents, as well as certain Portuguese officials, were at Mutassa's kraal before the date of the *modus vivendi* agreement. The capture of the latter took place shortly after that date, but before its signature was known in Manica.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION—MR. STOREY.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I desire, with the leave of the Speaker, to draw attention to a personal matter of some importance to me, though I am ill-disposed to intrude my personal affairs on the notice of the House. On Friday night the hon. Member for Ripon (Mr. Wharton), whom I have always regarded as a friend, asked a question relating to some private legal proceedings in which I have been engaged at Sunderland. Now, I believe it is unusual, and certainly it would be very inconvenient in many cases if it were the practice, to ask questions in the House concerning the private affairs of other hon. Members. But even if it were the practice, it is only fair that notice of the question should be given in accordance with the practice of the House, so that the Speaker, or the other officials of the House, might have an opportunity of pronouncing whether it was a proper question or not. Still more unusual is it that such a question should be asked without any notice whatever being given to the Member most concerned. But on Friday night the question I refer to was not on the Notice Paper, but was nevertheless put in such circumstances. It was put at the end of the list of questions, and the Home Secretary had evidently rehearsed the little play, because he rose at once with an answer pat to the question and gave it. I think, therefore, I have a right to complain of the course taken by the hon. Member for Ripon, especially in not giving me notice. I have sent the hon. Member notice that I intend to bring the matter forward to-day—to all the addresses I could find—the Oxford and Cambridge Club, the Carlton Club, and the House of Commons—the only addresses which appear in the books to which I have access. The only excuse, if any, the hon. Member can offer for raising the question on Friday was that a few nights before I had drawn attention to the conduct of the police of the County of Durham in regard to the famous baton charge. That charge took place on the 25th of February, and the proceedings in which my name was introduced related to an affair on the 20th February, so that the hon. Member could not even plead that justification for bringing the matter before the House. I hope the House will permit me to say, first, that it is quite correct that the case was tried before a Bench packed with my political opponents, and that I failed to sustain a charge of assault against the police. ["Oh!" *and cries of* "Order!"] Hon. Members opposite say "Oh." I make no complaint of the Magistrates who adjudicated on that occasion, but I may tell the House that the Magistrate who was in the chair was a gentleman whom the miners of Silksworth rejected for the County Council in favour of their own secretary; that the Magistrate next to him was a gentleman whom I defeated for the Borough of Sunderland, and that the two other Magistrates on the Bench were openly and notoriously my political and personal opponents. ["Order, order!" *and a* VOICE: "Monstrous!"] "Monstrous," says an hon. Member opposite. Well, I will still further earn the censure of that hon. Gentleman by making another statement—that I do not think, considering the weaknesses of ordinary human nature, that the conduct of the Magistrates is much to be condemned or complained of on the occasion; but I will say this, that the evidence before the Magistrates ——

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The hon. Member is entitled to complain of a question concerning him being put to the House without proper notice having been given, but he certainly would not be in order in re-trying the case in this House.

MR. STOREY: I shall not, of course, seek to re-try the case; but I suppose I may be permitted to say that the evidence upon the case will be tested in another Court, composed of competent men of legal training—[*Cries of* "Order!"]—and, in these circumstances, I will venture to ask the hon. Member for Ripon to withhold his opinion until the facts—the real facts—have been placed before him and before the House.

MOTION.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

*(4.30.) MR. W. H. SMITH: In rising to move the Resolution which stands in my name on the Paper, I may say I have heard that great objection has been raised to the Motion. But may I point out that the Parliamentary Session has already extended five weeks longer than is usual at this period of the year? The Motion is necessary in regard to Public Business, and is, therefore, made in the interests of the House and for the convenience of hon. Members, so as to enable the Government to prorogue Parliament many weeks earlier than usual—in July, in fact. Morning Sittings in April are, I may remind hon. Members, not unusual. There were three Morning Sittings in April, 1889; seven in May of the same year; four in April, 1890; and seven in May of that year. I am asking the House to give the Government seven Morning Sittings in the month of April, and this, I think, the circumstances of the case fully justify. The Government propose to proceed with the Irish Land Purchase Bill as the principal business directly after the Easter holidays, and I shall propose to take it on the first Thursday after the House has re-assembled unless some urgent business intervenes. The

Budget will not be taken until some days later. It is important we should proceed with the Land Bill from day to day as, in order to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion on the question, the whole energies of the Government and of the House ought to be devoted to the Bill. I beg to move the Resolution on the Paper.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That, unless the House otherwise order, the House do meet at Two of the clock on Tuesday and Friday, and that the provisions of Standing Order LVI. be extended to the Morning Sitting on those days."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

(4.33.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): There is no doubt that so much business is thrown upon the House that it is very difficult to find time for dealing with it. But it has been pointed out by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian that it is possible to overcome this trouble by adopting a system of derogation—a system which has been entirely ignored by the Government. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House is now asking us to give him the time of private Members up to Easter. What for? For a number of small Bills; and yet the right hon. Gentleman knows perfectly well that he is very much behindhand in the matter of Supply. Why does he not attempt to put forward Supply? Simply because he is now doing what, with all respect to him, I must say he always does do—he is making a muddle of the business of the House. ["Oh!"] Hon. Gentlemen opposite cry "Oh!" Possibly they have not had the experience of former Sessions. Well, I am content to take the experience of this Session alone. We were told in the Queen's Speech that there was to be a Tithes Bill, a Land Bill for Ireland, a Free Education Bill, and a Small Holdings Bill. I imagine that the Free Education Bill and the Small Holdings Bill have entirely disappeared from the Government programme. Certainly, the right hon. Gentleman said nothing about them. He said he wished to Prorogue the House in July. Up to the present time we have passed the Tithes Bill through its various stages in this House and have sent it to the Lords. The Irish Land Bill has been read a second time, and various other measures have been carried. Therefore, the right hon. Gentleman cannot for a moment complain that he has met with any sort of obstruction from this side of the House. Now, if he were to say: I am anxious to Prorogue the House in July, and, therefore, I will give up the Small Holdings Bill, and the Free Education Bill, and will only attempt to pass the Land Bill, and I will devote these Morning Sittings to the discussion of the Estimates, I imagine we should be able to look with favour upon his present proposal. But that is what he has not done. We are told that up to Easter the Government intend to take these Morning Sittings simply for the sake of pushing forward a few small Bills, and the right hon. Gentleman in his speech said it depended upon ourselves—it depended upon whether we passed the Vote on Account to-night—whether we should or should not get the proposed Easter holiday. He told us that it was absolutely necessary that that Vote should be agreed to to-night, and so it is, unless the House of Lords are prepared to do what they have done over and over again—to suspend their Standing Orders, and to pass the necessary Bill in one or two days. The right hon. Gentleman knows there is nothing more easy than for a Government to induce the House of Lords to do this, and, no doubt, if we do continue the Debate on the Vote on Account after to-night, that will be the course which will be adopted. I quite admit that the Government have a right, by long usage, to ask for one Vote on Account every Session; but unfortunately they do not limit themselves to a single Vote. We know they have asked for repeated Votes on Account in past Sessions. We have a right to discuss every shilling of public expenditure on these Votes; but when these claims upon us are made so frequently, it becomes absolutely impossible for us to adequately discuss them. I can only say that if we give this Vote on Account to-night, the right hon. Gentleman must understand that if he asks us for further Votes on Account later in the Session, we shall discuss them as though we were debating the Estimates. I hold that the consideration of the Estimates ought not to be put off until the close of the Session. The right hon. Gentleman tells us that after Easter he is going to take the Land Bill from day to day. But, at the same time, it must be remembered that there is the Budget to bring in and matters connected with it, and I do not see, therefore, how, in the months of May and June, the Government will be able to devote any time to Supply. The fact is Supply will be postponed until July, and then it will not receive the discussion which ought to be devoted to it. Now, personally, I should have no objection to Morning Sittings being generally adopted by the House as part and parcel of the scheme for the management of its business. I never, myself, have complained of counts-out taking place. I have always thought that if an hon. Member wants to bring forward a Motion, he ought to be able to induce 40 of his Colleagues to attend and help him make a House. I never yet understood why the Government were expected to make Houses on private Members' nights. The original idea was that on Friday night the Government might hope by 10 or 11 o'clock to get into Committee of Supply and then would be able to get a considerable number of Votes passed, but when Effective Supply is not put down, I do not see why the Government should be called upon to make a House. It was once said—I think by Lord Palmerston—that the business of a subordinate Member was to make a House, to keep a House, and to cheer Ministers. Well the Government could send down a few subordinate gentlemen to help make a House, and if it sent down 10 it might legitimately be expected that the Opposition would supply the remaining 30 to make up a quorum. Now if from the beginning of the Session the Government would have Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays, and pledge themselves to devote those sittings to the discussion of Supply, I think it would be a very good plan, because then there would be no inducement for Conservative Members to obstruct the Estimates, as the ordinary Government business could not possibly be interfered with. They would know perfectly well that in the end the House must sit on Tuesdays and Fridays until the Estimates were all passed. If the right hon. Gentleman would make a proposal of that sort. I would support him, but I would object to the right hon. Gentleman always speaking of the Standing Orders of the House as if they were like the laws of the Medes and Persians, and yet interrupting and altering them to make them suit his convenience. I do not think at present that the business of the House is in such a condition as to justify the right hon. Gentleman in asking for these Morning Sittings, and I shall vote against his proposal unless we have an assurance that instead of the small Bills he has said he will take, he will put down the Estimates for discussion on Tuesdays and Fridays up till Easter, and give a reasonable number of days during the months of May and June for the discussion of similar matters.

(4.43.) MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I think the right hon. Gentleman draws rather largely on the pliability of the House, and I was rather amused at the nature of the precedents which the right hon. Gentleman quoted. The right hon. Gentleman did not go back to what took place in earlier years as to morning sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays. All the precedents which the right hon. Gentleman quoted were precedents which he has himself set. In regard to Morning Sittings, as well as in other respects, if the right hon. Gentleman had gone back 10 years he would have found that the Government were then much more moderate in the drafts they made on the patience and the willingness of the House. The strong point in the case of the right hon. Gentleman is that he declares he is animated by a desire to bring about the Prorogation in decent time in the month of July. I hope the month of July does not mean the 31st of July. I am disposed myself to give every reasonable assistance to the right hon. Gentleman. I make the concession to the right hon. Gentleman that I think he was right to a great extent in his contention that the House will derive advantage, in the case of an extensive and complicated measure like the Land Bill, from as much continuity as possible. But there are two things which I missed entirely in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and upon which I wish seriously to press him. One is that he did not give any assurance that it is the serious intention of the Government to put forward Supply at an early date and—whether the Prorogation be in July or in August—not to allow Supply to drift to the latest weeks of the Session. I think the House is entitled to have an explicit declaration from the right hon. Gentleman on that subject. The right hon. Gentleman slipped, if I may say so, with great facility and adroitness over the whole subject of keeping a House on Fridays. Now there is some misunderstanding on that matter. The obligation of the Government to keep a House on Fridays never did arise altogether or mainly out of the belief that it would be able to get effective Supply on that day. Undoubtedly that point was reported upon by the Committee that recommended the present plan, but the obligation arose in this way—that before the Order was made which required Supply to be taken as the first business on Fridays, it was necessary to make a Motion every Friday, "That this House at its rising do adjourn till Monday next," and on that Motion all the miscellaneous Motions were made by private Members which are now made on the Motion for going into Committee of Supply. The consequence is that it is always an obligation of the Government to keep a House on Friday nights, and when the change was made to the present system, that duty of the Government was recognised explicitly, and it is a total mistake to speak of the Government as being under no necessity to keep a House on Fridays. And over and over again on, I must say, the very rare occasions when the Secretary to the Treasury failed to keep a House on the Friday, the unfortunate Secretary to the Treasury, whoever he was, on coming down on the Monday had to stand before the House morally in a white sheet and make his apologies for having been unable on the occasion to fulfil the duty of the Government. Any attempt to deny or extenuate that duty was never made. It is an extremely difficult thing for private Members to make a House at 9 o'clock, but with the obligation of the Government recognised with regard to Fridays, they have at least one chance in the week, and that is the least to which they ought to be reduced. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not think I have used him unfairly, but on these two points we are entitled to ask for assurances which it is sincerely to be trusted he will be disposed to give.

(4.52.) Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN (Birmingham, W.): The hon. Member for Northampton made a proposition which is worthy of a little more consideration than has been given to it. The hon. Member suggested for the block of business in the House a remedy which is sometimes proposed by Railway Directors when there is a block on the railway. They sometimes proposed a double line, one for goods traffic and the other for passengers. The hon. Member for Northampton suggests that the Government business should go on the ordinary lines, but that a new line in the shape of Morning Sittings on Tuesdays and Fridays should be created in order to enable hon. Members to discuss Supply to their hearts' content. He pointed out that under these circumstances there would be no obstruction, since delay with the Estimates would not affect the ordinary business of the Government. But I think the hon. Gentleman will see that if the plan he suggests were adopted, it would take from the Government a great deal of their present responsibility and control with regard to the Estimates, because to establish the practice of taking Supply at Morning Sittings would be something equivalent to the course of business in Grand Committees. It has been found impossible for the Grand Committees to be conducted on Party lines, and for the Government to be certain of a majority, and consequently, if this were applied to Supply, the Government would have to consider themselves discharged from responsibility for this important business. I should like to know what would happen if, on some occasion when an hon. Member should find himself in a temporary majority in the Committee of Supply on Tuesday or Friday, the hon. Member were to get up and propose to diminish the Army by 30,000 troops? Supposing a proposition of this kind were carried, what would be the position of the Government of the day—unless, indeed, the hon. Member for Northampton accompanies his proposition by a further suggestion that the Government shall have the right to re-introduce any Vote on the occasion of the Report to the House. Let the House consider the position in which we find ourselves.

The House, this Session, met at a much earlier date than usual, and it cannot be said that the Government have forced on the attention of the House any undue amount of public business. And, although we have been sitting for a considerable time, up to the present no practical progress has been made with Supply. We have, of course, not yet approached the questions arising out of the Budget, and we have two important Bills before us, one of which has not yet been approached in Committee. That makes it necessary for the Government to make this demand on our time at a confessedly early period of the Session, that not unnaturally leads to the wail that private Members are being robbed of their privileges. I venture to say that what is wanted is not more time. There is, under ordinary circumstances, quite sufficient time to deal with the ordinary business which is introduced by the Government, and also full time for the discussion of any important questions brought forward by private Members. But what is wanted is a better disposal of the time we have. The hon. Member for Northampton says there has been no obstruction during the present Session. Well, of course, one's definition of obstruction varies very much according to the side of the House on which one sits. But it will be the opinion, I imagine, of the great majority of the House that, at all events, much too great space of time has been given to unimportant matters, and that important matters have, consequently, been put aside; and, therefore, I submit to the House, for consideration at the proper time, the possibility, the desirability, of so amending the Orders as to give to the majority some greater control over the disposal, the division, of its time. In the American House of Representatives, where they found themselves face to face with a similar difficulty, they met it by a plan under which a Committee, which was called a Committee on Rules, reported to the House what time, in their opinion, should be allotted to the discussion of particular stages of Bills or particular Resolutions; and when that time was exhausted, then the vote on the Bill or on the Resolution was taken. I am perfectly convinced that a system of that kind would, in the long run, be found to work here, because, knowing exactly what proportion of the whole time of the House is allotted to a particular measure, the Opposition would arrange its discussion, and would take care that its strongest arguments and its best speakers have the opportunity to which they are entitled. Without some such disposal of the time, I am perfectly certain we shall continue to have these Resolutions of the Government in every Session, and probably at an earlier period in every Session, and that private Members will still continue to be without the facilities they desire.

*(4.57.) Mr. CAVENDISH BENTINCK (Whitehaven): I should not have interfered in this Debate but for an observation made by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian with regard to the obligation of a Government to keep a House on Friday night. I think the right hon. Gentleman has forgotten altogether what manner of man he was some years ago. I remember in days gone by when he was Leader of the House his contention was always the exact reverse, and now I am only too delighted to welcome him as a convert to my own views. It is perfectly true that when the alteration in the Rules of the House was made, whereby Supply was placed at the head of the Paper on Fridays, and the Motion for an Adjournment until Monday was got rid of, it was stated by Lord Palmerston that that would give Members of the House the full rights that they would have on any occasion when Supply was put at the head of the Paper. That was my contention, but it was resisted by the right hon. Gentleman on a memorable occasion, and when a Motion that "Mr. Speaker leave the Chair" had been agreed to, he refused to make the ordinary Motion from the Ministerial Bench that the House should resolve itself into a Committee of Supply. I fought that question with him before your predecessor (Mr. Denison) in the Chair, and he was good enough to decide in my favour, and declare that it was an obligation of the Government on such an occasion to renew the Motion for Supply. Therefore the right hon. Gentleman on that occasion was defeated. When Mr. Speaker Brand was in the Chair the same question again cropped up, and the right hon. Gentleman again refused to renew the Motion that "the House

resolve itself into a Committee of Supply." I myself then put a Motion on the Paper and argued it to the best of my ability. I was opposed by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian, and Mr. Brand decided that, though there was no absolute obligation on the part of the Government to renew the Motion, it was, at all events, customary and, as a matter of course, ought to be done. Now we have to-night this position: The right hon. Gentleman, having changed sides in the House, has taken up the position which formerly he resisted. What I contended was that Her Majesty's Government were bound to make a House on Friday; and particularly when the House met again at 9 o'clock. But I never heard it contended that the obligation of the Government was to go further than that. They are only bound to keep a House for a reasonable time, and it cannot be expected that they will sit for two or three hours for the benefit of the speeches of hon. Members below the Gangway. My object in rising was to express my satisfaction that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has taken the proper view that the Government are bound to make a House, but to add that they are not bound to do more than what is reasonable in this matter. If they keep a House for about an hour after 9 o'clock, I do not think they are called upon to extend their efforts any further.

*(5.3.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): Sir, there are two distinct questions: the making of a House on Friday, and the keeping of a House for the Motion that the Speaker leave the Chair, and the point raised in the setting up of Supply a second time. The First Lord of the Treasury said that there was no understood obligation on the part of the Government to set up Supply a second time, and the point which we wish to impress upon him is that the Government should make and keep a House until the Question is disposed of, "That the Speaker leave the Chair." As to the present state of business, I think you cannot point, in the last 10 years, to a 16th of March when the business of the Government was advanced up to this point. Three of the principal measures of the Government have been read a second time. One of the measures to which they attach great importance has passed through Committee of this House, and is coming from the other House, and in all probability the Amendments of the Lords will be disposed of before we adjourn for the Easter holidays. With reference to Supply, all the Supplementary Votes have been obtained except one or two. The great Votes for the Army and Navy have been obtained, and I think it would be difficult to find a year in which Supply has made the progress which it has made this year. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman when he proposes that the Speaker shall leave the Chair for the Civil Service Estimates? With all deference, I would suggest that some Votes should be taken before the Easter holidays. Are we to understand that the Irish Land Bill will not be taken until the Thursday, and that Monday and Tuesday will be taken for Supply after the Easter holidays?

(5.9.) MR. STUART RENDEL (Montgomeryshire): Can the right hon. Gentleman state on what day the House will be asked to consider the Lords Amendments to the Tithes Bill?

*(5.10.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): I wish to say a few words on behalf of hon. Members who, like myself, have to attend to other work besides that of this House. When I became a Member of this House it met at 4 o'clock. The hour was then brought down to 3, and it is still more inconvenient when 2 o'clock is fixed as the hour of meeting, though that inconvenience may not be felt by hon. Members who come from a distance and leave their business behind them. It is felt, however, by hon. Members who are at home in London and have their ordinary business to attend to. I think the object of the Government might be attained without inconvenience if they met at 3 o'clock on Tuesdays and took Government Business up to 8; the House might adjourn for half an hour as usual, and the evening sitting would commence at 9 and go on until 12. By this plan the Government will have as much time with private Members, only half an hour less than now, and we shall not be kept here until 1. There have been five Counts-out this Session, and the Government have been attacked in the newspapers for not

preventing them. I suggest that the Standing Orders should be altered, so that the effect of a count may be not to adjourn the House, but to pass to the next Order of the Day. In this way we shall escape from uninteresting subjects and dull speeches, and take up the next business of interest, or go on to Supply, for which Members will be ready to stop.

(5.13.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): I would point out that the course pursued by the hon. Members of the Government in counting out the House is one which retards Public Business. For four Friday nights I have put down a Motion regarding the grievances of Scotland. On three occasions the House was counted out. If the opportunity had been allowed me I could have dealt with the grievances of Scotland in one night's Sitting and in one speech; whereas I will now have to seek opportunities in Supply, and perhaps be compelled to make 20 speeches and take 20 Divisions. It is the junior Members of the Government who prevent Members coming in after dinner, when they see that there is no chance of getting Supply; and, of course, Members on this side of the House never think of leaving their dinner, or the Smoke Room, or Reading Room, because they expect the Government to keep a House. When you count out the House you will not prevent dull speakers from making speeches on the different Votes in Supply. The business of Supply is lengthened mainly because the Government allow the House to be counted out. Hon. Members must dine, and the half hour taken by the Chairman or Speaker is not sufficient. I think the course which has been adopted is a very unwise one, and prevents fair discussion.

(5.15.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): Will the right hon. Gentleman tell me whether the Civil Service Estimates will be taken first after Easter? There are several Motions down with regard to the Diplomatic Service of the Foreign Office, and we could hardly have a satisfactory discussion on the first day after the holidays. With regard to the suggestion thrown out by my right hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham in reference to the method adopted by the House of Representatives at Washington, I venture to suggest that it would only have the effect of making the majority of this House more tyrannical by putting larger opportunities of oppression into their hands. As to the other argument of my right hon. Friend, there would be no more danger of the Government being caught by a sudden Division in Supply than on a Bill. Why should not the Government keep a majority for Supply on Tuesdays and Fridays just as they will for the Irish Land Bill when it is in Committee?

*(5.17.) MR. W. H. SMITH: With the permission of the House, I will now reply to the questions that have been addressed to me. I have to thank hon. Members for the extremely valuable and varied advice I have received from them. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian that when the Counts-out took place there was such an obvious want of interest in the subjects before the House that the Counts-out were almost inevitable; but I do not see why hon. Members on the other side should have left the House at that particular time. To ask the Government to keep a House in such circumstance would be to increase against the Government the stringency of the existing Rule to an unreasonable extent. It is the duty of the Government to make a House for the first Motion on going into Supply on Fridays, and that they will continue to do. But it is only reasonable that hon. Members who make Motions should have some support from their own friends. The hon. Member for Caithness indicated that Liberal Members could not be expected to keep a House for Liberal Motions. If that be so, it is rather hard to expect his political opponents to do that which his own friends will not do. As to Supply being in a forward state, that is owing to the fact that, as Easter comes at an unusually early period this year, the Government are under the necessity of getting Supply as early as possible. The Government will certainly do what they can to make a House at 9 o'clock on Friday. As to the complaints about Votes on Account, we took two such Votes last year, one on March 21 and the other on May 23. There is no record in the last 20 years when so few Votes on Account were taken by any Government as by the present Government. I hope to be able to take the Lords' Amendments to the Tithe Bill

on Friday next, but as the hon. Member is aware, the last stage of that Bill has not as yet been passed by the other House. Therefore I am not able to give any positive assurance, but I may refer to the matter to-morrow. As to the Civil Service Estimates, I hope we shall be able to get the Speaker out of the Chair on Monday next. The Civil Service Estimates will be taken on the Monday after the holidays. The hon. Member for Caithness has complained that he has not been allowed to make one speech instead of many. If the hon. Member would confine himself to one speech full opportunity will be given him to make it in lieu of the many he promised for other occasions. We should be only too glad to purchase the hon. Member's silence for the rest of the Session on these terms, and I hope for that purpose we shall have the cordial support of Members on both sides.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That, unless the House otherwise order, the House do meet at Two of the clock on Tuesday and Friday; and that the provisions of Standing Order LVI. be extended to the Morning Sitting on those days.—(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (EXEMPTION FROM THE STANDING ORDER).

Ordered, That the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means be not interrupted, this night, under the Standing Order Sittings of the House, and may be taken at any hour, though opposed. —(*Mr. William Henry Smith.*)

JOINT STOCK COMPANIES.

Return ordered—

"Of the names, objects, or business places where business is or was conducted; date of registration; number of persons who signed the Memorandum of Association; total number of shares taken up by such subscribers; nominal capital; number of shares into which it is divided; number of shares taken up; amount of calls made on each share; and the total amount of calls received of all Joint Stock Companies formed since the 1st day of January, 1890, to the 31st day of December, 1890, inclusive; distinguishing whether the Companies are limited or unlimited, and also the number of shareholders in each of the said Companies at the date of the last Return, and whether still in operation or being wound up.

"Of the total number having their Registered Offices in the City of London, or within five miles of the General Post Office.

"And, of the total number, and the paid-up capital, of all Registered Companies which are believed to be carrying on business at the present time."—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 148.]

FACTORIES (ACCIDENTS CAUSED BY SHUTTLES.)

Address for—

"Return of the number of Accidents to Men, Women, Young Persons, and Children caused by Shuttles flying from Power Looms, which have occurred in the Cotton, Woollen, Worsted, Flax, and Silk Trades in each of the years ended on the 31st day of October, 1879, 1885, and 1890, in the following form:—

COTTON.

	Children.	Number of Persons injured.	1879.
	Males under 18 years of age.		
	Females above 13 years of age.		
	Males above 18 years of age.		
	Total number injured.		
	Number of Power Looms.		
	Number of Persons employed in factories where weaving is carried on.		
	Children.	Number of Persons injured.	1885.
	Males under 18 years of age.		
	Females above 13 years of age.		
	Males above 18 years of age.		
	Total number injured.		
	Number of Power Looms.		
	Number of Persons employed in factories where weaving is carried on.		
	Children.	Number of Persons injured.	1890.
	Males under 18 years of age.		
	Females above 13 years of age.		
	Males above 18 years of age.		
	Total number injured.		
	Number of Power Looms.		
	Number of Persons employed in factories where weaving is carried on.		

"And similar Returns for Woollen, Worsted, Flax, and Silk."—(*Mr. Shepherd Cross.*)

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

Copy ordered—

"Of Statistical Tables relating to Emigration and Immigrstion from and into the United Kingdom in the year 1890, and Report to the Board of Trade thereon."—(*Sir Michael Hicks Beach.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 147.]

EAST INDIA (INDIGO CULTIVATION).

Address for—

"Return of Correspondence between the Government of India and the Secretary of State for India, relating to the Cultivation of Indigo in Bengal."—(*Mr. Howorth.*)

MAURITIUS (EX-SULTAN ABDULLAH OF PERAK).

Address for—

"Return of Correspondence between the Government of Mauritius and the Colonial Office with reference to the case of the ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak."—(*Mr. F. S. Stevenson.*)

NEW WRIT.

For the County of Sligo (Northern Division), *v.* Peter Macdonald, esquire, deceased.—(*Mr. Donal Sullivan.*)

MOTIONS.

PRESUMPTION OF LIFE LIMITATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of the Lord Advocate, Bill to amend the Law of Scotland as regards Presumption of Life, ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 248.]

RETURNING OFFICERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.

On Motion of the Lord Advocate, Bill to regulate the charges of Returning Officers at Parliamentary Elections in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by the Lord Advocate and Mr. Solicitor General for Scotland.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 249.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY — CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1890-91.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CLASS III.

1. £150,000, Constabulary Force, Ireland.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): We are asked to grant £150,000 to make good a possible deficiency. The Royal Irish Constabulary have their pensions voted direct by Parliament. The amount this year is £305,388, but this fund forms no part of the superannuation fund at all; it is a separate fund called the Police Reward Fund, or the Constabulary Force Fund. It was created originally by fines of the police, and by a reduction of their pay by 10s. per cent. The time has actually not arrived when the fund is insufficient to meet its liabilities. The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that contingency may arise, and yet we are asked, without having a single fact or figure placed before us, to vote this £150,000. I would submit to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Committee that we are, at all events, entitled to know the present condition of the fund. Parliament is entitled to know exactly what are the assets and liabilities of the fund. If there is a deficiency let Parliament annually vote the sum. I think this is a dangerous precedent, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not press the Vote this evening.

*(5.32.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I am not surprised at the view which is taken by the right hon. Gentleman. No doubt there have been laches in the past, and while the present Government believe that no obligation has been incurred, past Irish Governments have allowed the idea to grow up in the Force that practically there is an obligation to meet any deficiency. The Force is uneasy with regard to the solvency of the fund, and the unhappy position is this, that while the members of the Force have been encouraged to believe they are safe, Parliament may theoretically, nevertheless, reject the responsibility. I think that would be a very serious thing for Parliament to do. It does not seem to me to be a good suggestion that we should leave the matter open from year to year, neither getting the benefit of freedom from liability nor increasing the confidence of the Force. I must say I think the course we have taken is the soundest course. We are not going to hand over the money, but we are going

to say we have provided for any deficiency. We have at all events taken a course which is somewhat inconvenient to ourselves, as it raises the expenditure of the year, but we have done so because we think it is the soundest course we can adopt. I cannot state exactly what the assets are; but I can say that few questions, if any, have given us more anxiety, and there are few which we have examined in greater detail. We should not feel justified in taking a smaller sum than this. I think the right hon. Gentleman will do me the justice to believe that if I had not thought it wise and necessary to increase the expenditure of this year, which is already very large, by asking Parliament to assent to this sum, I should not have given my assent to this Vote. I cannot accept the view that the Vote ought to be withdrawn, as it would give the impression to the Force that Parliament was doubtful about its obligation to pay. Parliament should either repudiate that obligation or pay; but it would be unwise to halt between the two opinions.

*(6.37.) SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The right hon. Gentleman has told his story clearly, although he has not given the details my right hon. Friend has asked for. But it is clear from the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman that nobody feels more strongly than he does how unfortunate has been the story of the past. As far as I can see, the concessions that have been made to the Constabulary have been made by the Executive and not under statute. We have been objecting very much to a large liability being laid upon subsequent Parliaments with regard to ships and guns; but in the case of ships and guns, the policy can alter from year to year, and we thought that Parliament ought to have an opportunity of reviewing it. With all respect to my right hon. Friend, I do not see the same objection in this case if we are quite certain that the scale of gratuities, allowances, and rewards, is fixed for ever—at any rate that the maximum is fixed. I think it is not only desirable, but absolutely necessary, that the Secretary for Ireland or the Secretary to the Treasury should speak most positively on this point. Nobody knows better than those who have been at the Irish Office what great pressure is put on the Government to increase the allowances for gratuities of this sort; and if the Government acquiesces in what I cannot but describe as the self-denying policy of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in putting all this sum on himself in one year, it should be on the distinct understanding that there shall be no increase at all in these allowances. I cannot help paying a tribute on this subject to the great financial and administrative abilities of Sir Robert Hamilton, and pointing out that if he was not the first to see, he most clearly, of all who had preceded him, saw through the objects of the administration of the fund, for it was while he was at Dublin Castle, in 1883, that the liabilities of the Fund were brought to an end.

*(5.40.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): We are fully alive to the dangers which have been pointed out. Undoubtedly there has been laxity in the administration of the fund in the past, but whether this is due to the Irish Government or the Treasury I will not pause to inquire. But the members of the Constabulary Force are in no way responsible for the regulations. They are bound by statute to contribute to this fund. The amount of the gratuities is settled for them, and we are bound in honour to see the transaction is a prudent one. If the transaction is financially rotten the burden should fall on the Government and not on the men. The lesson, however, will not be thrown away on the Irish Government or on the Treasury, and the Committee need be under no apprehension that the evils which have occurred in the administration of the fund in the past will be repeated.

*(5.42.) MR. GOSCHEN: I will supply the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton with full details in regard to the assets and liabilities, but he is acquainted with the character of the gentlemen who have been inquiring into these questions, and he may be assured that the Estimates have been very carefully scrutinised.

(5.43.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): It seems to me very astonishing that there is not a single Irish Member in the House when this Vote is being discussed. We have frequently to complain that we are persistently voting money for Ireland, and I think we ought to have some statement from the Irish Members as to whether they consider this Vote legitimate and proper.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS VI.

2. £3,915, Supplementary, Superannuations and Retired Allowances.

(5.44.) MR. H. H. FOWLER: I wish to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Government have any intention of introducing the Bill with regard to superannuation? It was introduced two years ago, but not last year, and, as a Member of the Royal Commission, which took a great deal of pains to see that superannuation should be put on a proper basis, I am anxious that the question should be properly dealt with.

*MR. GOSCHEN: It is a source of regret to the Government that they have not been able to deal with this question. I have this year again been over some of the clauses of the Bill, endeavouring to see whether we can secure the most indispensable conditions without putting into the Bill provisions which would excite opposition, such as we might not eventually be able to overcome, and which would greatly delay the progress of the measure. We will endeavour to pass that Bill whenever we see a reasonable chance of making progress with it.

*(5.46.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Under this Vote is an item of £1,000 as a pension for Sir J. P. Hennessy, granted on account of ill-health. I wish to know whether his Excellency is not well enough to resume his duties; whether he is the same person as the hon. Member for Kilkenny; and how it happens that a pension as ex-Governor does not disqualify for a seat in the House of Commons while a pension in the Civil Service does disqualify? Under what statute is the exception made?

(5.47.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he could not bring in some Bill throwing the burden of pensions for ex-Governors upon the colonies? At present, while it is laid down as a principle that we are not to pay the salaries of the Governors of most of our colonies, we are called upon to pay for their pensions. I always understood that the theory of a pension was that it was deferred salary, and if the colonies pay one portion of the salary, why should they not be called upon to pay the other portion which is given under the guise of superannuation allowances. I have not the slightest doubt that the hon. Member for North Kilkenny is labouring under such ill-health, as, though it permits him to take part in the proceedings of the House of Commons, would not justify him in risking his valuable life in the colonies. I am not in the least complaining of this, still, as there happens to be in this Vote a pension of £1,000 per annum for him, said to have been granted on the ground of ill health, I should like to know what sort of certificates are demanded before Governors obtain these pensions, and how long the certificate remains in force? Does it have to be renewed every year, or does the certificate relieve from service for the future altogether. Possibly, under the influence of the excellent atmosphere of this House, his Excellency's health may so improve as to enable him to again undertake the functions of the Colonial Governor, and I want to know whether it is possible to call upon him to do so? Speaking generally, I think we ought to have some sort of understanding about this matter. I have seen a good many diplomatists, and other Civil servants, going about in what appeared to me to be a most enviable state of health, and yet they have been for many years enjoying pensions.

*(5.50.) MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will also tell us upon what principle these superannuations are granted. I see that an hon. Member of this House (the Member for North Kilkenny) has obtained a pension of £1,000 a year for 20 years' service upon a salary of £5,000; whereas a very distinguished Colonial Governor—Sir Hercules Robinson—perhaps one of our most distinguished Colonial Governors—has, after a service of 35 years, and after receiving a larger salary of £7,000, only been granted a like amount of pension. That seems to me to be somewhat inconsistent. In one case, I admit, the retirement was on the ground of ill-health, and the other on the ground of

age; but the age of the two retiring Governors did not differ very much, Sir Hercules Robinson being 65 years of age, and the Member for North Kilkenny 56 years. As to the question of ill-health, if an hon. Member can go through an exciting election contest such as took place in North Kilkenny at the end of last year, and can undertake the fatiguing business of this House, I do not think his condition is so serious as would seem to be implied by the granting of a pension of £1,000 a year on the ground of ill-health. There are a few other pensions in this Vote which are open likewise to observation. I see there is one pension of £900 a year granted upon a salary of £1,250, and another pension of £700 only granted upon a salary of £2,000. In the one case there was 31 years' service, and in the other 32 years' service. It is very difficult to understand the principle upon which these superannuations are granted, and I think this Vote, therefore, requires a little explanation. I am not opposing the Vote, nor am I suggesting that the pensions are unjustifiable. I am only asking for information upon the points I have mentioned.

*(5.56.) THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The hon. Member for Islington was wrong in stating that there is any difference between a pension in the Civil Service and one in the Colonial Service. A Civil Service pension does not disqualify for a seat in the House of Commons. The Treasury has the power to call up for service again servants who have retired on a pension on account of ill-health. All these pensions are defined by statute; and, as to the case of Sir H. Robinson, he received the highest pension which the statute provides for ex-Colonial Governors.

*(5.58.) MR. BARTLEY: I was for over 20 years in the Public Service myself, and when I retired I was told by the Prime Minister of the day that if I had a pension granted to me—which I did not—it would have to be abandoned if I entered the House of Commons. That Prime Minister was a Conservative. I think the general opinion amongst Civil servants is that they cannot retain their pensions and sit in the House of Commons. Surely there ought to be one rule for everyone, and unless I receive a more satisfactory explanation, I shall move the reduction of the Vote.

(5.59.) MR. LABOUCHERE: Evidently a Tory Minister has done one good service, because he has saved his country from paying a pension to the hon. Gentleman opposite, who apparently has done very well without it. But the Secretary to the Treasury did not answer my question, namely, why these pensions are not paid by the colonies. I can only repeat my contention that they are a portion of the salary which the colonies are called upon to pay.

*MR. JACKSON: Until the hon. Member or someone else alters the law, the Treasury must continue to pay the pensions of Colonial Governors. The duty is imposed by statute. The hon. Member for Islington will find it most distinctly stated in Acts 32 & 33 Vict. that Civil Service pensions do not disqualify for seats in the House of Commons.

Vote agreed to.

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

3. £90,000, Post Office.

CIVIL SERVICES, 1890-91 (EXCESSES).

4. £5,885 10s. 11d., Civil Services (Excesses).

SUPPLY—CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT.

5. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £3,917,003, be granted to Her Majesty, on account, for or towards defraying the Charges for the following Civil Services and Revenue Departments for the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, viz:—

CIVIL SERVICES.

CLASS I.

	£
Royal Palaces and Marlborough House	6,000
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens ..	16,000
Houses of Parliament Buildings ..	5,000
Admiralty, Extension of Buildings ..	4,000
Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, Great Britain	11,000
Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain	5,000
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings	9,000
Revenue Department Buildings ..	56,000
Public Buildings, Great Britain ..	30,000
Surveys of the United Kingdom ..	40,000

Harbours, &c. under Board of Trade, and Lighthouses abroad	4,000
Peterhead Harbour	5,000
Caledonian Canal	1,000
Rates on Government Property (Great Britain and Ireland)	90,000
Public Works and Buildings, Ireland	40,000
Railways, Ireland	100,000

CLASS II.

United Kingdom and England :—

House of Lords, Offices	4,000
House of Commons, Offices.. ..	5,000
Treasury and Subordinate Departments	15,000
Home Office and Subordinate Departments	15,000
Foreign Office	6,000
Colonial Office	7,000
Privy Council Office and Subordinate Departments	2,500
Board of Trade and Subordinate Departments	30,000
Bankruptcy Department of the Board of Trade	3
Board of Agriculture	8,000
Charity Commission	7,000
Civil Service Commission	7,000
Exchequer and Audit Department ..	10,000
Friendly Societies, Registry ..	1,500
Local Government Board	27,000
Lunacy Commission	2,000
Mercantile Marine Fund, Grant in Aid	— —
Mint (including Coinage)	20,000
National Debt Office	2,500
Public Works Loan Commission ..	1,500
Record Office	4,000
Registrar General's Office	110,000
Stationery Office and Printing ..	70,000
Woods, Forests, &c., Office of ..	6,000
Works and Public Buildings, Office of	8,000
Secret Service	6,000

Scotland :—

Secretary for Scotland	2,000
Fishery Board	4,000
Lunacy Commission	1,600
Registrar General's Office	15,000
Board of Supervision	1,500

Ireland :—

Lord Lieutenant's Household ..	1,000
Chief Secretary and Subordinate Departments	7,000
Charitable Donations and Bequests Office	400
Local Government Board	15,000
Record Office	1,000
Public Works Office	10,000
Registrar General's Office	5,000
Valuation and Boundary Survey ..	6,000

CLASS III.

United Kingdom and England :—

Law Charges	8,000
Miscellaneous Legal Expenses ..	6,000
Supreme Court of Judicature and Land Registry	65,000
Land Registry	1,000
County Courts	10,000
Police Courts (London and Sheerness)	3,000
Police, England and Wales ..	10,000
Prisons, England and the Colonies ..	110,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools, Great Britain	80,000
Broadmoor Criminal Lunatic Asylum	6,000

Scotland :—

Law Charges and Courts of Law ..	10,000
Register House	6,000
Crofters' Commission	1,500
Prisons, Scotland	15,000

Ireland :—

Law Charges and Criminal Prosecutions	15,000
Supreme Court of Judicature, and other Legal Departments	20,000
Land Commission	18,000
County Court Officers, &c.	18,000
Dublin Metropolitan Police, &c. ..	20,000
Constabulary	300,000
Prisons, Ireland	20,000
Reformatory and Industrial Schools ..	30,000
Dundrum Criminal Lunatic Asylum..	1,500

CLASS IV.

United Kingdom and England :—

Public Education, England and Wales	820,000
Science and Art Department, United Kingdom	50,000
British Museum	27,000
National Gallery	3,000
National Portrait Gallery	600
Learned Societies, United Kingdom..	5,000
Universities and Colleges, Great Britain..	10,500
London University	3,000

Scotland :—

Public Education	160,000
National Gallery	400

Ireland :—

Public Education..	180,000
Endowed Schools Commissioners ..	200
National Gallery	300
Queen's Colleges	500

CLASS V.

Diplomatic Services and Consular Services	100,000
Slave Trade Services	1,500
Colonial Services, including South Africa..	25,000
Cyprus, Grant in Aid	— —
Subsidies to Telegraph Companies, &c.	16,000

CLASS VI.

Superannuation and Retired Allowances	120,000
Merchant Seamen's Fund Pensions, &c.	1,000
Friendly Societies Deficiency ..	— —
Miscellaneous Charitable and other Allowances, Great Britain ..	500
Pauper Lunatics, Ireland	70,000
Hospitals and Charities, Ireland. ..	4,000

CLASS VII.

Temporary Commissions	7,000
Miscellaneous Expenses	1,000
Pleuro Pneumonia	— —
Total for Civil Services	£3,247,000

REVENUE DEPARTMENTS.

Customs	100,000
Inland Revenue	100,000
Post Office	100,000
Post Office Packet Service	20,000
Post Office Telegraphs	350,000
Total for Revenue Departments	£670,000
Grand Total	£3,917,003

*(6.2.) MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): On this Vote I take the opportunity of asking some questions of the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and of calling attention to certain matters relating to the condition of affairs in Armenia. It is within the knowledge of the Committee that a few weeks ago a White Book appeared, giving an account of what has taken place in Armenia during the past year, and I asked the right hon. Gentleman why no Despatches were contained in this White Book dictating or recommending a policy, or making any actual suggestion as to what ought to be done by Sir William White and those under him in Armenia? The reply given me was to the effect that as far back as the 20th January, 1890, a Despatch had been sent from the Foreign Office including certain recommendations, and these were in the nature of standing recommendations, and there was no necessity to send a special Despatch. But I venture to think that if hon. Members will look at this White Book relating to Armenia, they will find in it a record of a state of things so serious, a condition of affairs so grave, that it must be matter of surprise that active steps were not taken here in London to bring about a remedy for the grievances of the Armenian population. It cannot be too often brought to our memory that our interest in the affairs of Armenia is not one of a purely sentimental character. We are bound by two distinct Treaty obligations, in the first place, in common with the other signatory European Powers, by the 61st Article of the Berlin Treaty, in which the Porte undertook to carry out certain reforms in Armenia, and to protect the Christian people against the depredations of the Kurds and Circassians, and in the next place we are bound more expressly and more emphatically by the Cyprus Convention of 1878, under which a special obligation was imposed on this country, of seeing the reforms carried out in Armenia and in other parts of the Turkish Empire. We are under this double obligation, the one we share in common with other European nations, and in a special sense by the stipulations of the Cyprus Convention. That being so, what is the state of things revealed in this White Book, published a few weeks ago? The first observation that occurs to me is that many of the matters which have formed the subject of Question in this House find full corroboration in the statements made, in spite of the very imperfect information that exists at head-quarters. I take the opportunity to say that so far as the conduct of Mr. Clifford Lloyd can be judged by the Papers, he did his best under very trying circumstances. This I say not merely out of deference to the sentiment expressed in the proverb *de mortuis nil nisi bonum;* the perusal of his Despatches will convince any reader that the reforms he recommended were defeated by the apathy of the Government at Constantinople, and by the fact that he was not backed as he should have been by the Foreign Office. When we look at what Mr. Clifford Lloyd has written and know what he did, we are driven to the irresistible conclusion—that although there were certain objections to his being sent on his mission to Armenia, yet for his action while there high praise should be bestowed upon him. What do we find to be the purport of these Despatches of Mr. Clifford Lloyd? A state of things is revealed and explained at great length, with clearness and fulness of detail on page 80 of these Papers. There will be found a series of recommendations put forward by Mr. Clifford Lloyd based on the information he possessed of the condition of affairs in that country. The sufferings of the people, he said, proceeded from three direct causes: first, the insecurity of their lives and properties owing to the habitual ravages of the Kurds; secondly, the insecurity of their persons, and the absence of all liberty of thought and action; and, thirdly, the unequal *status* held by the Christian as compared with the Mussulman in the eyes of the Government. So far as the lives and liberties of the people are concerned, the statement finds full con-

firmation in earlier Despatches. Thus, on February 12, 1890, Mr. Clifford Lloyd, writing from Erzeroum, refers to a very signal instance—the imprisonment of certain Armenians—and the case is remarkable. He says—

> "In my Despatch dated the 31st January' 1890, I alluded to the fact of there being in the gaol at Erzeroum five Armenians awaiting the confirmation of a sentence of exile for life to some portion of the Turkish Empire on a charge of sedition. I have caused inquiry to be made into the case of these persons, and, though it is extremely difficult to obtain reliable information, I learn from various sources, independent one of the other, that the offence of four of the prisoners consisted in having been found in possession of 'national songs,' and that of a fifth, a priest, in having had in his house a history of Armenia published in Venice. These men have been for about two years already in prison. There is good reason to believe that the case of these unfortunate prisoners is no uncommon one. In fact, a high Turkish official informed me that some 30 Armenians, similarly charged and sentenced, had lately been deported from Erzeroum to their respective destinations."

This in itself affords sufficient confirmation of the Minute submitted on October 2nd. The great bulk of the Despatches are made up of three incidents. One is the trial of Armenian political prisoners, and upon this I will only say in reference to the so-called amnesty given by the Sultan that the latest information of a few days ago is to the effect that the great bulk of the prisoners are still in prison; another section of the Despatches is devoted mainly to the incident at Koum Kapou, which I do not propose to dwell upon; and a third section of the Despatches has reference to disturbances at Erzeroum, there being numerous Despatches relating to that subject. But the sum and substance of the Despatches is contained in the long Minute from Mr. Clifford Lloyd, dated October 2nd, 1890. Mr. Clifford Lloyd points out that as late as June 20th, 1890—

> "A Mussulman mob attacked unoffending Armenians in the streets of Erzeroum, killing and wounding many, and at the same time pillaging their houses and shops; but up to date no steps of any kind have, to my knowledge, been taken to prosecute the guilty persons."

This is convincing proof, I think, that many of the statements which have been made in the Press as to the condition of affairs in Erzeroum were founded on fact so far as the main features were concerned; but, of course, in the state of things existing, no one can bind himself to the accuracy of details, and there, of course, the Oriental imagination plays a part. But we have to judge of the sum total of the evidence before us, and the general tendency of these Despatches, and I say these Despatches confirm Reports made by distinguished travellers and missionaries who have watched the condition of affairs with the eyes of utter impartiality. There is the testimony of Mrs. Bishop, formerly Miss Bird, who, in a letter, says she had passed through Kurdistan and through the country of the Nestorians and Armenians, and could bear testimony to the increasing ravages of the Kurds and the total want of protection given by the Government to the Christians in the villayets of Van, Tiflis, and Erzeroum. This is similar to the evidence of other travellers conversant with the condition of affairs. A good deal has been said upon another point—the arming of the Kurds—and this, during the last few weeks, has taken a special form. It appears that the Governor is enrolling a regiment of these Kurds, and the answer given by the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and which we may take to be the Turkish official defence of this step, is that by this means it is hoped these Kurds will be made more amenable to discipline, and their habits of ravage and pillage will be controlled. But I think, on the contrary, there is every reason to regard the proceeding with the utmost distrust. There is too much reason to believe that the enlistment of these Kurds very much resembles the enlistment of Bashi-Bazouks. The right hon. Gentleman said the experiment is one that will be watched with the greatest attention, but I think some very energetic steps should be taken at Constantinople for the purpose of inducing the Turkish Government to interfere in this matter, which involves a violation of the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin, which states that the Armenians are to be protected against the depredations of these Kurds. But here we find the Turkish Government, instead of giving this protection to the people, entrusting the Armenian people to the tender mercies of these armed Kurds. Why, this is like entrusting the sheep to the custody of the wolf. I cannot see how this proceeding can commend itself to this country, which has definite, moral, and Treaty obligations to see that justice is done to these Christian populations. We find if we turn to this Despatch of of Mr. Clifford Lloyd, of which I have spoken, we find that he confirms what has been reported from other quarters, that these Kurds have for a long time been receiving arms from Turkish officers. Mr. Clifford Lloyd says—

> "The result is that this summer the valley (Alashgird) has again been overrun by the Kurds, who, here as in other parts of Kurdistan, openly declare that their action meets with the approval of the Turkish Government."

Instances are to be found scattered through the whole of these official Papers; and taking them altogether, although there may be inaccuracies pointed out which is to be expected from the remoteness of some of the districts and the difficulty of obtaining information, they represent the state of things which has been confirmed by other evidence, and the whole condition of things in Armenia represents a state of oppression and terrorism which is a disgrace to the controlling Government, and would be a disgrace to any nation under the sun. I do not wish to dwell on details, but I must say it is remarkable that throughout these Papers there is not a single Despatch from the Foreign Office except of a purely formal character, no Despatch anywhere laying down a statement of the policy which ought to be observed; and although the Under Secretary has referred to a previous Despatch contained in a previous Blue Book giving instructions for Her Majesty's Representative to carry out, yet I think that the Despatch is not of such a permanent binding character as to be applicable at such a distance of time to the very serious matters that have occurred in Armenia since. I think the Foreign Office should take a more active interest in this subject, seeing the obligations we are under by the stipulations in the Cyprus Convention, which have never been repudiated, as we find from statements made by the Foreign Secretary and Under Secretary. What is our position in Constantinople? Undoubtedly Mr. Clifford Lloyd appears to have been supported by Sir W. White. Of this there can be no serious doubt, but the question is whether Sir W. White has been supported by our Foreign Office. Time was when we had great influence in Constantinople in the days of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe and others, but then behind our Ambassador was the strong support of our Foreign Office. I think if there was energetic support now there would be some progress in carrying out reforms in the Government of the Christian population of the Turkish Empire. Perhaps the Under Secretary can give us some definition of the view the Foreign Office take of the Cyprus Convention of 1788? In the second place, I would ask him to give some sort of pledge that they will take more active steps than in the past they have taken to support the action of Sir W. White in Constantinople to encourage him in the course he is disposed to take. Thirdly, I would like to know from the right hon. Gentleman whether, and to what extent, the Foreign Office are acting upon the 61st Article of the Treaty of Berlin; whether they are making any attempts to enter into negotiations with the other Powers—signatories to the Berlin Treaty—to carry out the reforms contemplated by that Article in Asia Minor. Apart from the injustice to Armenians in the present administration of the Province, it is a source of weakness to the Turkish Empire, and I would ask the right hon. Gentleman for an expression of opinion. Does he not think that a large measure of autonomy would strengthen the Turkish Government in Asia Minor? There can be no doubt of the capacity of the Armenians for self-government when we remember that many of the officials at Constantinople are of Armenian birth; that Loris Melikoff, in the service of Russia, is an Armenian, as is also Nubar Pasha. The only valid argument against putting the Administration of Armenia into the hands of the Armenians is that the Armenian population is not sufficient to justify it. But the figures and statistics on this subject are of a misleading character and contradictory. This may be said of the computations made in the Despatch of May 14 on these Papers. Very little actual importance can be attached to them. The nomadic tribes of Kurds who commit these ravages may be left out of the calculation of the settled population. The quiet law-abiding people belong to the Armenian race, and they give to the country whatever stability it possesses; they are the working classes, and they are the wealthy class, and they should be entrusted with local administration. From the carrying out of these reforms the Turkish Empire will acquire strength and stability, but the ultimate result of a refusal of these reforms can only be to throw Armenia into the hands of Russia, a consummation we ought to do our best to avert.

*(6.26.) MR. G. LEVESON-GOWER (Stoke-upon-Trent): I am sure I shall express the feeling of the House when I say that I share the regret the Government must feel at the decease of Mr. Clifford Lloyd, and that the country has experienced a great loss in being deprived of the ability, zeal, and activity of the late Consul in Armenia. I daresay it will occur to the right hon. Baronet that not so very long ago in one of his speeches, delivered with that verve and sarcastic humour for which the Prime Minister is well known, and upon which not so many years ago he was complimented by Lord Beaconsfield, Lord Salisbury, speaking to the Associated Chambers of Commerce, remarked upon the inutility and undesirability of remonstrating with a Foreign Power except in such cases where we were prepared to back our remonstrance with physical force. I daresay it may appear to the right hon. Baronet that the course we are taking is somewhat inconsistent with that position. For my own part, I think true diplomacy consists in using the eyes and the ears much, the tongue little, and the hands less. But I think my hon. Friend has shown that in the case of Armenia there are special reasons why this country—I do not say should intervene—but should use every effort within our power to induce the Porte to grant a better Government and remove some of the elements of misrule. In the Cyprus Convention there are stipulations that certain reforms shall be introduced, and they are conditions of our assistance for the defence of the Asiatic frontier. Such reforms do not imply a brand new Constitution according to the ideas of Western Europe, but a practical working system of administration suited to the country and the condition of the population under which the people may be secured tolerable good government and protection to life and property. The evidence is conclusive that they have nothing of the kind at the present time. One principal object should be to restrain the raids of the Kurdish tribes, who have ever been nomadic robbers. There should be an impartial administration of justice as between Christian and Mussulman populations, and the religious and educational privileges of the Armenians should not be interfered with as they are now under pretence of stopping seditious and revolutionary movements. We have to try and see that these lamentable outrages which constantly occur shall be put down, that the extortions on the part of the minor officials of the Turkish Government, under the guise of levying taxes, may be put an end to, and that the Christian population of that part of Turkey shall not be looked upon as sheep appointed to the slaughter. Lastly, there is one great grievance of which they complain—and to my mind justly complain—and that is, that the most frivolous and unsatisfactory reasons are enough to cause them to be sent into imprisonment or exile. Now, what are the means by which these grievances can be put an end to? The best means by which this could be attained would be to have a Christian Governor who should be assisted by a mixed gendarmerie force—I mean a force in which some proportion of the officers and men should be Christians. The Mussulman population, being in the majority, might urge certain objections to this plan; but I believe the improvement in the condition of the country that would result from the appointment of an able and energetic Christian Governor, with the corresponding improvement of their own property, would soon reconcile the Mussulmans to such a state of things. There is another reason for adopting such a plan. It would be easier for a Christian Governor to be impartial in his decisions of suits, for it is well known that although by the Constitution, as my hon. Friend pointed out, there is a nominal and apparent equality between Mussulmans and Christians, in practice that is very far from being the case, because the Koran does not admit the evidence of a Christian as against that of a Mussulman; and if the Governor is a religious man, he is bound

to follow the precept of his religion in this matter. If there were any evidence of partiality being shown by a Christian Governor towards his co-religionists it would be sure to find its way to Constantinople, where it would be thoroughly sifted. Of course, if it is impossible, owing to the prejudices of the Mussulman people, to have a Christian Governor, we must, I suppose, acquiesce in the appointment of a Mussulman Governor; but we should take care that he is an energetic Governor. Still, the point of a mixed gendarmerie, properly officered and armed, a force from which Christians should not be excluded, would be, in my opinion, a necessary element in the settlement of those difficulties. No doubt the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will refer with pride to the Papers that have been recently presented as evidence of the efforts the Government have been making by representations to the Porte to improve the state of things in Armenia. I have no desire to grudge or deny him this legitimate satisfaction. The right hon. Gentleman will probably go on to say that the action taken by hon. Members in this matter—the frequent interpellations and interventions which take place in the British Parliament—really do more harm than good on the ground that they annoy and exasperate the Sultan. I should be very sorry to contribute to such a result; but I cannot forget the 35 years' sad experience we have had in this matter. We have seen, again and again, how the Porte delights to make a promise to the ear and to break it to the sense, and we have had only two cases—in the Lebanon and in Crete—in which self-government and good government have been secured to Christian populations. And this was from outside pressure, and not through spontaneous action. The Government may say that having done so well already, the best course to adopt will be to leave them to take a fitting opportunity of representing the necessity of reforms to the Sultan and his advisers. I would not accuse my right hon. Friend of indifference, but I believe there is a certain disposition on the part of the Foreign Office to "masterly inactivity" and to "leave well alone," and perhaps a little pressure in Parliament will assist them. Mr. Lloyd has complained that the frequent publication of exaggerated and unfounded charges of outrage and misgovernment on the part of the Porte does great harm to the cause we all have at heart. I am quite alive to the truth of this remark; at the same time, although false accounts may now and again have crept in, we have sufficient evidence in the Report now on the Table, and from independent sources, to show that where there is this smoke there is also some fire. There are two or three questions to which, very briefly, I should like to draw the attention of the hon. Baronet, and the first of these is with regard to Moussa Bey. I will not go through the whole history of the Moussa Bey incidents, as we had that last year. It is more or less a past and finished matter, but what I want to ask is whether it is certain that Moussa Bey, having been sent to Medina, will be kept there, or whether, after a time, when European feeling has subsided, and in accordance with the practice of the Porte in such cases, he will be allowed to return, and again become a pest to his country? When anyone has been intriguing against the Porte, the Turkish Government has no scruple in sending him into exile, from which he very rarely returns; but if it is only a question of conciliating European sentiment by an apparent condemnation, the man may probably be sent off for a few months and then, when the matter is tided over and has dropped out of notice, he pops up again and returns to renew his malpractices. Another point is in regard to the treatment of Christians in the recent disturbance at Erzeroum. Although I admit that the Christians were to blame in not taking the advice of the officer who called on them to disperse when they were holding their meeting, and still more in attacking the soldiers, yet I hold the Turkish Governor primarily and chiefly to blame in the matter, for the disturbance was wholly brought about through an irritating search for arms which was made in the Christian school and church, without any justification and without any result. This is clear from the Despatches received from Her Majesty's Representatives in that part of the world. It is also clear that blame is to be attached to the subsequent conduct of the Turkish Government, for in spite of the remonstrances of

Consul Lloyd, backed up by those of his Excellency, Sir W. White, at Constantinople, Armenians were imprisoned for their share in the disturbances, whilst from beginning to end no Mahommedans were punished. With the permission of the Committee, I will quote one of Mr. Clifford Lloyd's dispatches to show how strongly he regarded the gravity of the question. On June 26th, Mr. Fane, in a Despatch to Lord Salisbury, says he has received the following information from Mr. Lloyd:—

> "I am personally of opinion that danger is over for the moment; but a number of Armenians are being arrested by order of the Government, while no steps are being taken towards the prosecution of any of the Mussulman mob who were engaged in the affray of Friday. An extremely bad effect may be caused by this action, and fanaticism may be thereby encouraged."

Later on Mr. Consul Lloyd writes to Mr. Fane—

> "In connection with the events of the 20th June here, a few more Christians have been arrested, making a total of 24 now in custody. No Mussulmans have yet been arrested for the murder and pillage of the Christians on that day."

Though there was a tardy dismissal of one Turkish official on September 22nd, 28 Armenians were kept in prison for three months without trial, and no Mussulmans were imprisoned at all. I contend that action of that kind on the part of the Turkish Government is an incitement to murder and pillage, and that the effect on the Mussulman population is most demoralising in these large towns if action is taken on one side and not on the other, and no sort of semblance of impartiality is maintained. And, now, I would draw attention to what I look on as a most serious element in the state of the country, and that is the considerable movement of population that is taking place within Armenia at the present time. It may be taken for granted that no population desert their homes, their farms, and commerce unless they are suffering from considerable extortion and oppression, yet a large movement of population is taking place in Armenia. That movement is of two kinds, namely, the emigration of Armenian Christians from their own country into Persia, and the immigration of Circassians from Russian territory in the Caucasus into Armenia. There are two Despatches amongst the Papers in the hands of the House which illustrate this point. On page 25 it will be found that Consul Lloyd, writing to Sir W. White, says—

> "In this country an Armenian family may be reckoned as consisting of at least seven persons, which would indicate that arrangements have been concluded for the emigration of from 4,000 to 4,500 persons. The Turkish Government, however, sustains its prohibition."

The Armenians are not allowed to live in their own country in peace and quiet, and when they propose to go elsewhere they are detained by the Turkish Government to continue longer the prey and the spoil of the Kurds. Consul Lloyd says—

> "The poverty among these people and the Christian inhabitants of the adjoining districts is stated to be very great. Their lamentable condition seems to result from, on the one hand, the heavy, and in some respects unjust, taxation imposed by the Government, and levied without consideration by subordinate officials, and on the other, from the exactions and ravages of the neighbouring Kurds."

As to the immigration into Armenia from the Caucasus, Sir W. White, in a previous Despatch to Lord Salisbury, says—

> "I have ascertained the following respecting the immigration of the Circassians from the Caucasus. It would seem that the number reaches 50,000; that the Russian Government has made no objection to the departure of these people who are looked upon as rather a disorderly population."

In the same Despatch he says—

> "I understand that the immigration is dictated in a great measure by fanatical reasons, these people desiring to inhabit a Mussulman country."

From what took place in 1876 and 1877 it is well known what is the Circassian idea of the proper line of behaviour in a Mussulman country; and I fear that unless some steps are taken to have a proper watch kept on these people they will inaugurate their arrival in their new home, if not by indiscriminate massacre, at any rate by violent attacks upon the population. I appeal to the Government to do what they can to rescue these unfortunate people, the agricultural population in the small Christian villages, who, as every account agrees, are being systematically plundered and harried. The honour of their women is not safe; their own lives are not safe; they have no chance of living in peace in their own country. It is true that some years ago it was only the orthodox Armenians who were persecuted by the Turks, but the persecution is no longer confined to them. The Armenian Roman Catholics are subjected to the same treatment as their fellow-countrymen of different religions, and I had plenty of proof of this last October, when I visited the Armenian convent at Venice. Lord Beaconsfield once spoke of the Turks as an historic people; but they are known in history only as having destroyed everything they met with, and having created nothing. The Armenians, on the other hand, may truly be referred to as an historic people. They have a very different record. They have made a name in the world of art, of literature, and of commerce; and there is, at the present time, a flourishing Armenian community in Manchester, embracing amongst its members some of the most respected citizens. The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary will be aware that a meeting of these Armenians was held in Manchester not long ago to express sympathy with their fellow-countrymen in Armenia. I ask the right hon. Gentleman to remember that these people are gradually being harried out of existence. If Her Majesty's Government are able to secure for them safety and protection, the Armenian nation, through many a generation, will remember the name of England with gratitude and thankfulness; and though England will only be doing her duty in listening to the voice of humanity and justice, it will be no small thing to earn the gratitude and thankfulness of the Christian population of Armenia.

(6.56.) MR. LABOUCHERE: Wherever there is misgovernment my sympathies are with the misgoverned. My sympathies are with the oppressed in China, Africa, Turkey, but I have never yet been able to understand why hon. Gentlemen have such a peculiar, special, and sentimental affection for the Armenians. The Armenians are not one atom worse off than the Christians in the European provinces of Turkey. Wherever the Turk is, there must be the grossest misgovernment. The fact of Turkish misgovernment is as old as the Turkish Empire itself, yet, whenever it has been thought advisable by other Powers to clear the Turks out of Europe, England has always interfered, either on the ground that it is necessary to maintain the balance of power in Europe, or on the ground of her interests in the East. Wherever there are Armenians under Turkish rule, there, in the very nature of things, will be bad government. The hon. Member who has just sat down seemed to think that the Armenians are limited to the Province of Armenia. Geographically they are, but the Armenians are spread over the greater part of the Turkish Empire, and the majority of them live outside Armenia, if you include those under the sway of Russia. What is the condition of things in the Province of Armenia? It is populated by Kurds and Armenians. The Kurds live to a great extent in the mountains, and their habit is to come down and blackmail the Armenian villages. So long as the villagers pay what is demanded, as the Scotch Lowlanders used to pay to Rob Roy and his Highlanders, they are left in quiet; but when they cannot pay, the Kurds descend and exercise cruelty upon them. The reason why the Turkish Government does not interfere is that the supremacy of the Turks in Armenia depends entirely upon their playing into the hands of the Kurds. Turkey makes of the Kurds a species of irregular cavalry, and they are no doubt a defence in that part of Asia Minor against an attack on the part of Russia or an attempt on the part of the Christian population to throw off the Turkish sway. The sole reason why, it is said, England should interfere is on account of the Treaty of Cyprus. Under that treaty the Turks engaged to establish reforms in Armenia and Asia Minor, and the *quid pro quo* was that England should guarantee the dominion of the Turks in Asia Minor. Well, I do not suppose the Government consider themselves bound by any such guarantee now, but if we are to claim that those reforms shall be carried out, we shall have to recognise that guarantee. I do hope the country has arrived at that state of wisdom that it will not be dragged into war in order to maintain the Turk in Europe or in Asia. As far as Turkey in Europe is concerned we may leave it to the rivalries and jealousies of Austria and Russia, but so far as Asia Minor is concerned, if the Russians are determined to take Armenia, let them take it. But as a matter of fact we do not intend to go to war either for Armenia or for Asia Minor. The Turk knows this fact well, and understands that his Government must be an oppressive Government to the Christians, because if the Christians had the power they would certainly overthrow the Turkish Government. Therefore, if you maintain the Turkish rule you must also accept the fact that Turkish government will be bad and oppressive. But the main reason why I have risen is that I am anxious to obtain from the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what are the views of the Government on this question. The guarantee which we gave that Asia Minor should be defended against all comers, was the main condition on which we received the Island of Cyprus; the other condition being that the Turkish Government should carry out the desired reform. We said that if those reforms were carried out we would recognise our guarantee. The matter is very important. If we call on the Turkish Government to accept these reforms on the plea of the Convention of Cyprus, then we recognise our guarantee. We could not defend Armenia against Russian attacks. The Russians are close by, and might overwhelm Armenia at any time, and we can only prevent their doing this by going to war with Russia, blockading or trying to blockade St. Petersburg, and doing injury to Russia in other parts of the world. Therefore, I urge that in making demands for reforms in Armenia we should not put them on the ground of the Cyprus Convention, unless we are prepared to do what would certainly be most unwise and impolitic, namely, by recognising the Cyprus Convention to declare that we did take Asia Minor under our care.

*(7.5.) MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I agree with the hon. Member for Northampton in what he has said about sympathy with misgoverned peoples wherever they are found, but, at the same time, I do not quite understand the tone he has taken in this Debate. The reason why many of us take so strong an interest in this Armenian question is that there exists scarcely any country claiming to be civilised in which such open violence, so much cruelty, and such repeated robberies and murders are perpetrated as is the case in Armenia. The Treaty of Cyprus, which will no doubt be fully explained by the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is the basis and standpoint from which we argue. The hon. Member for Northampton has said the people of Armenia would prefer to be in the hands of Russia rather than under the rule of the Turk, in order that they might escape from the suffering to which they are now subjected. We know that this will practically be out of the frying pan into the fire. Doubtless the Government of Russia is somewhat better than that of the Porte, but it still leaves so much to be desired that if I were an Armenian, I should have great difficulty in choosing under which Government I should prefer to live. But there is no reason why we should not bring what pressure is possible to bear upon the Porte. I should like to hear the Under Secretary explain what is the opinion of Her Majesty's Representatives in Armenia in reference to the recent proposal to arm the Kurds, and form them into separate regiments. In answer to a question put to him the other day, the hon. Baronet told us that, although the Government look on the arming of the Kurds with some amount of apprehension, it might turn out to be for the benefit of the Armenians, by organising and placing under military control the lawless wandering hordes of Kurds and Circassians. This may be so; but I wish to know whether it is true, as has been stated in the newspapers, that the British Consul, as soon as he had heard of this arming of the Kurds, entered a strong protest against it, pointing out how inimical to the interests of Armenia such a step would be. If the hon. Baronet has obtained any further information on this subject I should be glad if he would give us the benefit of it. I should also like to know what amount of truth there is in the statement that messages have been sent to the Armenian colleges that Armenian history is not to be taught in them. I I should like to know whether this is the fact? and, having said this, I will only add the expression of my hope that the hon. Baronet will use his exertions in furtherance of our Treaty obligations to the Armenians so as to mitigate, as

much as possible, the sufferings of that unhappy people.

*(7.10.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The House will bear in mind that many things have been said on the present occasion that have not been stated for the first time, and I may admit that it is not surprising that in a history so painful in many respects as that of the Turkish Provinces of Asia there should be many gentlemen who pay attention to public affairs, and who take a special interest in these matters, who find it impossible to refrain from calling attention to the subject. At the same time, it is to be regretted that those who have such keen sympathy for the sufferings of the Armenians, and such hatred of misgovernment generally, should have shut their eyes to the efforts that have been, and are being, made to carry out their own wishes, and to the results that have already accrued. I think that while we should all regret and condemn indifference on the part of our officials to misgovernment and outrage, and while, also, we must all sympathise with the oppressed, we should, at the same time, be doing wrong to be indifferent to the efforts Her Majesty's Government are making to obtain a remedy for the evils complained of. With regard to what has been said by hon. Members with reference to the interference of this House, I would ask hon. Members to consider whether the interference of the House of Commons can in this case be exercised for good, first, upon Her Majesty's Government, and then upon the Turkish Government, in stimulating them to efforts to bring about a better state of things in the Armenian Provinces. If such interference is accompanied by denunciation of the Ottoman Government in the Asiatic Provinces, what good result can possibly accrue from advice offered by Her Majesty's Government when, at the same time, the Ottoman Government are able to point to expressions of hon. Members of this House declaring hatred of Turkish rule and denouncing entirely the government of the Turks? I venture to think that the remonstrances that may be fitting and acceptable for us to make ought to be the remonstrances of a friendly Government, and not such as have been suggested. At all events, that is not the sense in which the Government have hereto counselled the Porte. We have used our efforts to obtain the repression of disorder in the Turkish Provinces, and I am glad to say that the Ottoman Government have recognised that the advice we have given them has been given in a friendly spirit, and with every desire to promote the welfare of the country. The hon. Member for the Eye Division of Suffolk, who opened this discussion, said while rendering a just tribute to the exertion of the late Mr. C. Lloyd to obtain justice and protection for the Christians in what is called Armenia, that gentleman had not received sufficient backing from London. I say that that is a most unfounded charge. The hon. Gentleman said that, although it is more than a year ago that instructions were sent out to Sir William White to use his best efforts to procure a better state of things in the Asiatic Provinces, they have not been followed up by repetitions of those instructions. I think the Committee will recognise that an Ambassador in the position of Sir William White does not require to have his instructions constantly repeated by Her Majesty's Government. An officer whose merits have been acknowledged by the Government which preceded that of Her Majesty's present advisers should be left to use his discretion in carrying out the instructions he has received. That he has carried out these Resolutions is justified by the Papers which are before the House. I think these are the words of the Despatch:—

"6th December, 1890"—

this is later than the Papers presented to the House—

> "For my part, I do not relax my efforts to induce the Sublime Porte whenever I can to induce the Sultan to select trustworthy civil and judicial officers, and thus ensure a better administration of those districts, with security of life and property to all alike in them."

That shows that Sir W. White does not require any fresh instructions, and that no efforts are spared to produce those results which we are all desirous of obtaining. Reference has been made to a letter from a lady who has travelled through these districts, in which she has spoken of the increasing outrages of the Kurds. That account does not agree with the testimony of Her Majesty's

Officers in those districts. It is true we are obliged to record very lamentable occurrences, which show the necessity of continued efforts to repress them. For instance, in November there was a bad murder; in January an Armenian was beaten to death by zaptiehs, or constables; and from Erzeroum our acting Consul reported misconduct of the Kaimakan. In the first case the prompt action of the Governor General procured the arrest of five men who were guilty of the outrage; in the second case the Vali at Erzeroum, on the requisition of the Consul, immediately ordered inquiries to be made; and in the third case the officer whose conduct has been complained of was dismissed. That is a proof that the representations of Her Majesty's Government are not in vain. I cannot help saying that many erroneous and exaggerated statements are made which do more harm than good and only serve to prejudice the Armenian cause. I sometimes feel great reluctance in throwing cold water on well-meant representations from hon. Members on the other side of the House; but after repeated instances of reports apparently believed in and brought forward on that side of the House, I cannot help thinking that Her Majesty's Representatives are thoroughly justified in not reporting rumours that come to their knowledge until they have investigated those rumours. For instance, in the *Daily News* of September 16, 1890, there was a telegram from Igdys headed "Disorder in Armenia," which, on inquiry by the British Representative, proved to be erroneous and false; on December 3, 1890, the *Daily News* contained an account of the desecration of a church at Mush, which, on inquiry, was proved never to have taken place. The same paper stated that "A priest escaped from Van says, 'But for the presence of the Russian and British Consuls no life would be safe.'" As the result of inquiry into this, Mr. Devey states that the report "scarcely called for serious notice." Many similar outrages are reported, all wholly without foundation. With regard to the levying of blackmail and the withdrawal of protection from the Armenians, Mr. Devey states that the representations made are wholly incorrect, and that the levying of blackmail had been steadily repressed by the Turkish authorities. Then comes a very curious statement made by the hon. Member for Aberdeen in a question with regard to an attack on the Van Consulate. On inquiry being made the Vice Consul denied the report categorically. I think that these instances ought to make hon. Members pause before giving credence to information telegraphed home by newspaper correspondents, many of whom have never been near the place. It is too true that murders do take place, and in Crete they seem to come as much from one race or set of religionists as another. There there is a strong religious animosity existing between the different creeds, and nothing but strong impartial government will prevent these occurrences. We have reason to believe, however, that measures are now really being taken to remedy this state of things. Mr. Devey speaks of the active conduct of some of the present Governors in Asia Minor. An extraordinary statement was lately made that on one occasion 18,000 stacks of hay were burnt. The case has been investigated, and it is found that 5 or 10 stacks had been burnt, and the culprits were seized and delivered to the Courts of Justice. In another case, where the seizing of corn was reported, it is found to be a very petty affair, and the culprits punished. All the reports show that there is much more energy on the part of the authorities, and no want of zeal on the part of our Representatives. With regard to the riots at Erzeroum, the local Consul and the Ambassador have recommended the execution of certain measures which seem peculiarly desirable to them; and I have a long list of results from applications made by our Representatives which have led not only the Vice Consul at Van, but also the Consul at Erzeroum and Sir W. White, to say that there appears to be a better state of things existing in those Provinces, that the authorities are showing greater activity and a greater anxiety to repress outrages, and that the condition of the people generally is better than it has been in former years. Hon. Members have made certain suggestions. The hon. Member for Eye recommended increased autonomy in Armenia. The hon. Member for Stoke advocated the appointment of a Christian Governor for these Provinces, while he admitted that the Mussulman population is in a considerable majority. Of all proposals that is the least practicable—absolutely hopeless for Her Majesty's Government to recommend to the Porte, and absolutely hopeless to expect the Ottoman Government to adopt. The hon. Member also asked if we believed Moussa Bey would be allowed to return to the scene of his former atrocities, or whether his exile would be permanent. I think it is extremely improbable he will be allowed to return. On account of the failure of justice in the case of Moussa Bey, the Minister of Justice was dismissed from his position, and the House ought to recognise that as a proof of the desire of the Ottoman Government to do justice. Indeed, whenever a flagrant disregard of justice has been brought to the notice of the Sultan, he has promptly punished it. The hon. Member for Stoke also referred to the desire of the Armenians to migrate to Persian territory, but I must say I do not think the language he used was likely to be very persuasive to the Ottoman Government. I would not have ventured, as has the Member for Northampton, to compare Moussa Bey to Rob Roy; but, while talking of the proposal to embody some regiments of Kurds for the protection of the land, I think it right to point to the success which attended the formation of highland regiments after the last rising. The whole population of the borderland had previously lived in terror of the highland clans; but this state of affairs was entirely changed by embodying those brave though turbulent people into regiments, in which afterwards they performed most distinguished service. Even wild tribes often make excellent soldiers. I know how well the hill tribes of India, who gave so much trouble to the British Government in the early part of this century, became most excellent soldiers, and I once had the pleasure of placing the order of merit on the breast of a man who had been captured at the taking of a hill fort. Therefore, this method of pacifying highlanders is not new. I told the House the other day that the experiment of forming regiments of Kurds was one which must be watched with anxiety; but if carried out with judgment and prudence it may not be at all a fresh danger to the Armenians, but may have the effect of pacifying the Kurds, and of giving greater protection to the people. The Member for North Manchester asked whether it was true that the Vice Consul protested against this step. He certainly did no such thing. The Ottoman Government is well aware of the view Her Majesty's Government take of the matter, and we hope that, while these levies may constitute an additional source of strength to the Empire, they may also be the means of lessening disorder and of giving increased security to the peaceable inhabitants. For Her Majesty's Government I can say that, wherever a well-authenticated case of injustice or oppression has been brought to the notice of our Representatives, communications have been addressed to the Turkish authorities either at Constantinople or on the spot in a friendly manner—in the way best calculated, in the opinion of our experienced agents, to procure redress—and in many cases those representations have been successful. The condition of these Provinces has shown a decided improvement, and Her Majesty's Government have every reason to believe that the choice of prudent and wise governors will in time tend to greater improvement.

(7.40.) Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): The right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in his observations, suggested that this was a matter which had frequently been before the House, and so it is, for it seems always to be the same story on the one hand and the same reply on the other. The right hon. Gentleman never tells us more than that he has reason to believe an improvement is taking place. But I fear that the Under Secretary does not appreciate the gravity of the new features which have arisen in this question. He endeavoured to make the House believe that things are improving, but the Blue Book of January last shows that the state of things has, in some respects, become graver. Of course, we do not know if he has other information with more recent Despatches. In the first place, there is a disposition on the part of the Christian Armenians to emigrate into Russian and Persian territory. That is conclusive proof of the miseries under which they suffer. In the second place, a considerable number of Armenians appear to have indicated a wish to join the Greek Church, which shows how strong is their desire to obtain Russian protection, and which will open to Russia a pretext for interference she has not now. In the third place, the riots and disorders which have arisen in Constantinople present quite a new feature in the situation. I believe nothing so serious has occurred since the 15th century. Sir William White recognises the gravity of these proceedings, which he says show the growing animosity rankling among the Armenians even at Constantinople. A fourth fact of some gravity is to be found in the relations of the Russian and Turkish Armenians. The Committee may not know that there have been very strong movements of sympathy amongst the Persians, and still more amongst the Russian Armenians. They have come to sympathise very warmly with the sufferings of their fellow-countrymen, who live under the tyranny of the Turk, and it has been with difficulty that they have been restrained from organising armed demonstrations against Turkey. These are only some of the new and alarming features which the events of the last two or three years present, and which make us feel that it is more than ever necessary for Her Majesty's Government to endeavour to supply a remedy before it is too late. I listened in vain to the speech of the Under Secretary for any word of sympathy for the people, for any word of acknowledgment of the sufferings which they undergo. He seemed to devote himself entirely, as he has done in all the Debates we have had on these matters, to extenuating and palliating the cruelties and atrocities of the Turks.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I do not think the hon. Gentleman is doing me justice, I have always said that I sympathise as much as anyone can with the sufferings of the people.

MR. BRYCE: I accept those words for what they are worth; but I must observe that the right hon. Gentleman directed his whole speech, as he usually does, to an endeavour partly to deny and partly to extenuate, palliate, and excuse the atrocities which are perpetrated by the Kurds. The burden of his song has always been, "You are exaggerating; this and that are proved not to have happened; the Turkish Government is hardly pressed; and you ought not to say anything which can touch its susceptibilities." It would be wiser and better if the right hon. Gentleman would tell the Turk in plain terms what the country thinks, if he would avail himself of the opportunity we give him to speak in firm language, and to tell the Turk the opinion of enlightened Europe, and particularly that this country condemns in the strongest manner the indifference of the Turkish Government to the atrocities perpetrated under their sway. The right hon. Gentleman has adverted to the Reports which we have under the incontrovertible authority of Mr. Clifford Lloyd and Mr. Devey. Mr. Clifford Lloyd seems to have shown himself to be a man of great energy and humanity; and in his position at Erzeroum he did his best, with tact, firmness, and moderation, to induce the Turkish Government to adopt a different course. Here are some of his words in a Minute which he transmitted on the 2nd of October last—

"It is admitted by every one that a change is necessary in the system of government now being applied to the Christian population of Kurdistan, *i. e.*, the Armenian people. Their sufferings at present proceed from three direct causes:—(1) The insecurity of their lives and properties owing to the habitual ravages of the Kurds. (2) The insecurity of their persons, and the absence of all liberty of thought and action (excepting the exercise of public worship). (3) The unequal status held by the Christian as compared with the Mussulman in the eyes of the Government. As regards No. 1, putting aside isolated instances of depredation, there has been pillage on the most extensive scale, with much slaughter, by Kurds in various parts of Armenia during the past few months, as will be observed from my Despatches dated the 21st August and the 1st October 1890. This year the record is an exceptionally large one, but the position of the defenceless Armenian peasantry with reference to the Kurds, who are all armed, varies only in degree, and looked at from any point of view, is one calling for immediate relief. There are two courses open to the Turkish Government in its desire to protect its Armenian subjects; one to actually and completely subjugate the Kurds by force of arms; and the other to adequately protect the Armenian peasants from Kurdish aggression. The former would entail a large expenditure of money, and in all probability bring about a general massacre of those for whose benefit it was undertaken. Many reasons exist for not suggesting this course, not the least of which is that, under any circumstances, the Turkish Government could not be induced to adopt it. It is, however, the first duty of every Government to

> protect its subjects, and in this instance duty and self-interest both demand it. The Armenian peasantry are unable at present to pay their taxes owing to the ravages of the Kurds, and from the same cause are reduced to such a state of discontent that they are willing even to forsake their homes, and it is said also their religion, if relief could thus be obtained."

He goes on to say—

> "The result is that this summer the valley has been again overrun by the Kurds, who here, as in other parts of Kurdistan, openly declare that their action meets with the approval of the Turkish Government."

That is the *gravamen* of our charge. It is not that the Turkish Government is unable to protect its subjects: it is that *sub rosâ* it encourages the Kurds: it does not take the steps that are within its power to keep the Kurds in order. Some years ago I travelled in Russian Armenia—it adjoins this territory. In the Russian territory the Kurds give no trouble at all, because they know that there is military force to suppress any misconduct on their part. If the Turkish Government desires to do its duty it can do it; it is will and not power that is wanting. Mr. Clifford Lloyd proceeds to say—

> "The third cause is the inequality of justice and consideration shown to the Christian inhabitants of this country, both by the Executive Government and by the Law Officers. This is well known to everyone conversant with the condition of Kurdistan, but, as an instance, I may mention the fact that in all crimes of violence of which the Christians have been the victims during the past year in the Province of Erzeroum no one has been punished, nor, with very few exceptions, has any effort been even made to bring the offenders to justice."

That clearly shows that in Mr. Clifford Lloyd's opinion it is not want of power, but want of will on the part of the Turkish Government that prevents them making reforms. He proceeds—

> "Whatever other reforms may be desirable, they are not of the same pressing necessity as immediate measures for the protection of the lives and properties of the people. The agricultural portion of the Armenian people plead not as rebels, but as subjects of His Majesty the Sultan, for this protection; but in the words of the Note presented 10 years ago to the Sublime Porte on this same subject, the Local Government at Erzeroum seems 'to refuse to recognise the degree of anarchy which exists' in this Province, or 'the gravity of a state of things which, if permitted to continue, would, in all probability, lead to the destruction of the Christian population of vast districts.'"

I am sorry to say I cannot share the hopeful views of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the attitude of the Turkish Government on this question. Too many things go to show that the Turkish Government think that the way to get rid of the Armenian question is to get rid of the Armenians themselves. I have only one or two more quotations to make, but I must make them on account of the entire neglect of the right hon. Gentleman to dwell on this part of the case. I will quote a passage which you will find on page 28 of the Blue Book—

> "At present, as your Excellency is aware, the Kurds are armed and the Christian peasants unarmed and helpless, the latter sow and the former appropriate the harvest to their own wants, while to gratify their instincts they often burn and destroy what they do not appropriate. On the other hand, owing to these circumstances, the peasants get into arrears in the payment of taxes, the collection of which proceeds by arbitrary and sometimes by cruel methods on the part of subordinate officials, and redress in the one case and the other being for various reasons refused or withheld, the Christian peasants are reduced to a state of abject poverty, fear, and discontent. Any combination for the purpose of petitioning the Government for assistance and consideration is met by the application of those measures only excusable in the case of a people plotting revolution. This the Armenian people in this country are far from contemplating. There are undoubtedly young and indiscreet persons to be found here, as elsewhere, who at times act imprudently, but my observation and information lead me to the belief, held also by all those whose local experience constitutes them authorities on the point, that if the Christian peasants were adequately secured against the attacks and ravages of the Kurds they would be as contented and loyal as they are naturally industrious."

Elsewhere in the Blue Book there is ample proof that the only thing that is likely to provoke revolutionary outbreaks is the total absence of justice and the impossibility of obtaining it. That also is the opinion which Mr. Devey, who, writing from Van, says, on page 74 of the Blue Book—

> "As rumours have been spread again of late of the growth of seditious sentiments among Armenians, I take this occasion of once more submitting most respectfully my private opinion that no real revolutionary feeling exists in either Bitlis or Van. The general loyalty of the Armenian community is perfectly sound, and if efficient protection were afforded to the Christian agricultural population throughout the districts, combined with something more than a mere perfunctory display, or rather semblance, of executing justice, I venture to think that the cause of many well-founded complaints would be removed."

I am not selecting these extracts and

distorting them from their context; I am giving what I believe to be the substantial result of the Blue Book, and I think any hon. Member who reads the Blue Book can only come to the conclusion that there is a total want of wish on the part of the Turkish Government to introduce reform. I understood the right hon. Gentleman to deny that the Kurds are armed.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: No, I did not deny that. I denied on the authority of the Consuls that they had been armed by the Government with the Martini-Henry rifle.

MR. BRYCE: But they are. I hold in my hand a letter from Mrs. Bishop, whose authority is unquestionable. She says—

> "My own caravan was attacked by Kurds armed with the Martini-Henry rifle, as most of them are."

She also states that she passed through a valley which had been bared by them; they had committed robberies, women and girls had been outraged under circumstances of peculiar brutality, and girls had been carried off to the mountains. Against all this evidence the right hon. Gentleman can only quote the assurances of Turkish officials, which he will scarcely venture to say he believes. We are fortunate in having at Constantinople a man of so much ability, experience, and energy, as Sir W. White; but there is no evidence that Her Majesty's Government have sent him such Despatches as are likely to have any influence upon the Turkish Government. It has been said that any attempt on the part of the Government of this country to endeavour to compel Turkey to treat her Christian subjects justly, would be an act of gratuitous philanthropy on our part. It would be nothing of the kind. It is owing to the action of this country more than of the other great Powers that the Turkish Government exists. If it had not been for the action of this country, probably the Sultan would not now be reigning at Constantinople. Therefore, we are bound by every consideration of honour and humanity to see that she acts fairly to her unhappy subjects. It may be asked, with some plausibility, what is the use of us interfering in the matter, and I own that there is something academical and idle in our constantly making the same complaints in the face of our being met by the same *non possumus* argument. In my opinion, however, it is time that the Government of this country made a step forward in this matter. During the last five years Her Majesty's Government have never attempted to induce the other great Powers to co-operate with us in endeavouring to induce Turkey to do her duty by her subjects. If we made some effort in that direction we should, at all events, be discharging our consciences as a Christian community. Much might be accomplished if we could only induce the Turkish Government to appoint a better class of Governors, instead of men who are only able to maintain their positions by exacting from the people such sums as will enable them to bribe the officials at Constantinople. Mr. Bartley, in a little book which he has written on Turkey, points out that a good Governor of a province is unable to effect any reforms, because directly he attempts to do so he is re-called. If the Sultan could be induced to send out better Governors and give them proper support, and not listen to the voices of intrigue and detraction which are raised against them in the capital, I believe a very great improvement might be effected without the appointment of Christian Governors. Unfortunately we have no evidence that Her Majesty's Government press in that direction, still less have we evidence that they endeavour to induce other Powers to co-operate with them. I fear nothing will be obtained until there are joint representations from the Powers made to the Sultan. It only lies upon us to endeavour to obtain the concurrence of the other Powers, and if we cannot obtain that, to go frankly to Russia and ask her to aid us in bringing about an amelioration of the condition of the people. I feel that this matter is one of greater gravity than the House realises. The time will come when the Christian populations will become the leading element in those districts: Is it proper we should endeavour to help them to improve their condition? I still believe that great firmness on the part of the Government might even now awaken the Turks to a sense of the evil which they are doing to the danger to their own power which arises from the perpetuation of anarchy in Armenia.

(8.10.) MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I am rather inclined to agree with the hon. Gentleman the Member for Aberdeen that these repeated Debates upon Armenian matters are but idle beating of the air and waste of Parliamentary time. But whatever may be the feeling of the Government, we have the consolation of having done our duty by constantly calling the attention of the Government and the country to these matters. I have not the slightest expectation of seeing Her Majesty's Government goaded into any action than their present action; and even if they were induced to use anything more than polite diplomatic language to the Turk, I have not the slightest expectation of seeing it attended with any success. Therefore, while I entirely sympathise with the suggestions which have been made across the Table, I cannot help thinking it will need something far stronger than we are likely to get from Her Majesty's Government before we see any alteration in the attitude of the Turks towards their Armenian subjects. I do not quite agree with the hon. Member for Aberdeen that the difficulty would be met by sending out good Turkish Governors. I do not recollect any case where a Turkish Governor has been sent to quell disturbance and has succeeded. I am not aware of any case where it might not be said of Turkish Governors that evil communications corrupt good manners. In fine, I do not believe you could get a respectable Turkish Governor who would be able to resist the temptation of the gain which wholesale pillage of his unfortunate Armenian subjects would bring to him; and therefore I am inclined to discard, as a practical solution of the difficulty, the proposition that you could find a respectable Turk to go out and bring about good government and general contentment and prosperity in these unfortunate provinces. But to suppose that Her Majesty's Government are in the least serious about this business is absurd. I never knew a time when a Tory Government was serious in bringing any form of coercion to bear upon any people except the Irish. They have always entertained a feeling of affection and respect for the unspeakable Turk, and it would be inconsistent with the general principles of Toryism if they were to undertake the mission suggested by the hon. Member for Aberdeen. Whatever our feeling or pity for the Armenians may be, and however anxious we may be to produce something like law and order in Armenia—and however we may fail in our efforts in that direction—I think we may require them to do something to look after the interests of our own fellow-subjects. Long ago I was convinced that a Tory aristocratic Government, consisting of noble Lords in in another place, and Baronets and other great men on that Bench, is not the best representative Government for a commercial nation like our own. We have great cause to complain of the neglect of the commercial interests of the country which the Government display. I have to refer in particular to a statement which appeared in this morning's papers with respect to the treatment of a particular person who had commercial business in Asia Minor. The facts, so far as I gather them from the papers, are these: A gentleman named Pilling, a citizen of Manchester, had a concession for the construction of a railway from St. Jean d'Acre to Damascus. I do not propose to discuss the wisdom of the construction of such a railway. I think it would be better, from the point of view of the picturesque, that there should be no such railway; but considering it desirable to construct, and having obtained a concession from the Sultan, how was this gentleman treated? The concession, like every concession, was limited to a certain time. Owing to the difficulties of the last few months Mr. Pilling was unable to carry out the conditions under which the concession had been granted to him. Instead of the Turkish Authorities showing him consideration as any civilised Christian Government would, they came down upon him, and, so to speak, estreated the money he had deposited. There was an exceedingly amusing account in the papers of the way in which the Turks danced with joy at the very idea of fingering the Christian's cash. I do not mention these facts for the purpose of showing that this gentleman was entitled to any consideration, but for the purpose of drawing attention to the different manner in which the different Governments attend to the commercial interests of their subjects. The German Government is particularly solicitous for the commercial interests of German subjects, and the consequence is that wherever you go—to Africa or the East, or any other part of the world—you find that the commercial agents of German firms are outstripping our own commercial agents. Their Consuls are so many touting agents for German interests.

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I rise to Order. I beg to ask you, Sir, whether the hon. Member is speaking to the question before the Committee?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is speaking about the conduct of the Foreign Office.

MR. CONYBEARE: I am sorry my argument was not quite clear to the hon. Member. Although I must apologise for having gone somewhat more into detail in connection with the case than I intended, I was, at the moment of the interruption, explaining my view—it may be a wrong view—that whereas other Governments look after the commercial interests of their subjects in all parts of the world, our Foreign Office shows a total disregard of the commercial interests of our own fellow countrymen, a fact which tells very seriously against the extension of our commercial interests. That is surely a grievance which we have a right to bring to the notice of the right hon. Gentleman who represents the Foreign Office in this House. In connection with the question of a concession such as that I have mentioned, it is quite obvious that the Government might have brought some gentle persuasive pressure to bear on the Sultan to extend the time allowed for the carrying out of the conditions of the concession. I ask the Government to bestow a little attention to these insignificant details, and if no other argument can be employed to attract the conscience of the Government to this and other kindred subjects, I would humbly submit the possibility of the minds of the constituents of the Under Secretary, who are largely interested from a commercial point of view in undertakings in the East and elsewhere, and especially in Armenia, being awakened to the gravity of the situation in Armenia. The right hon. Gentleman shakes his head. I do not for the moment recollect what Division of Manchester the right hon. Gentleman has the honour to represent, but I do know the Armenian colony in Manchester is a very considerable and important factor. I hope there are many Armenians in his constituency, and I strongly recommend all Armenians who have commercial interests in this country to try whether they cannot raise such an agitation in the right hon. Gentleman's constituency as will force him to take far more energetic action in this matter than he seems inclined to do. There is only one other word I want to say, and it is that whether the whole of Asia Minor eventually comes under the rule of the Russians or not, I feel quite certain that the sooner it passes from the rule of the Turk the better. No one will contend that there are not unlimited resources of all kinds in that great peninsula which we know as Asia Minor. What is being done? With the exception of a few places like Smyrna, on the coast, practically the whole of that great territory is closed to the outer world. It might just as well be in the interior of China as where it is. I do not say that the whole of the territory should pass into the hands of the Armenians, who are a minority of the population, but whoever the Government of it may pass to, I hope it will pass into the hands of some nation who will be able to develop its resources and do something for the benefit of the population. Past history shows that the Turks have done nothing towards developing the resources of Asia Minor, but ruin and misery have followed their rule. The time is coming, I hope, when Armenia will be free from Turkish Administration, and the wealth of the country will be developed under the influence of civilisation.

*(8.30.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I only rise to express my regret that the hon. Member should have allowed himself the use of such terms as he has employed towards a Power and a Sovereign with whom this country is in friendly relations.

MR. CONYBEARE: Unspeakable?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: It is a word most unsuitable to the occasion. It is very much to be regretted that the hon. Member should have used the expression "unspeakable Turk" as a description of the Sovereign of a country in friendly relations with Her Majesty. Against this I venture to enter my protest, though I hope there are not many Members who would fall into such a mistake. As to the question the hon. Member has raised respecting a British subject, who, the hon. Gentleman alleges, has suffered some injustice at the hands of the Turkish Government, I have to say that it is my daily duty to inquire into cases in which British subjects make complaints, and to make representations concerning them, but I do not recognise such a case under the description the hon. Member has given. If it can be shown to me that a British subject has really suffered injustice at the hands of the Turkish Government, we will, of course, make representations; but if the case in question is merely that in which a concession was revoked after its limit had been passed, I am not sure that I see in it grounds for interference. (8.32.)

(9.5.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I see that the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary has not yet returned to his place. He has, however, left three despatch boxes on the Treasury Bench. One I suppose he has exhausted, because it is no doubt the Ottoman box. The two others are, I suppose, the Tokar box and the Manica box. I shall finish by moving the reduction of the Vote by £100, in regard to the salary of the Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I have spoken of this matter frequently in the House, and I shall probably speak of it frequently again, because I think it is a question of paramount importance, and I am surprised that the House of Commons and the country are not fully awake to the dangers we are incurring. I should like to know where the Nonconformist conscience is. It appears that that very sensitive membrane can only take in one Commandment at a time; and it does not seem particularly ready to take in the Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit murder." In 1884, when the Dervishes were attacked in the Soudan, the Nonconformist conscience was aroused. Since then worse things have been committed, and yet no strong feeling has been aroused in the country about them, though the awakening will no doubt come. At that time it was asserted, rightly or wrongly, that Suakin was in danger. An understanding was come to with the Egyptian Government, who declared that the Soudan had been abandoned for good and all; and the noble Lord the Member for Rossendale (Lord Hartington) told the House at that time that the Government would abandon it under certain conditions, and that this country was to remain for a certain time in Egypt. Those conditions have been fulfilled, and yet we find that the Egyptians are not only making a raid and massacring the Dervishes, but the Government have claimed that the Egyptians have laid hold of a portion of the Eastern Soudan. I have really not yet discovered what the policy and the intentions of the Government are, and how the Government can possibly justify the advice they have given to the Egyptian Government inducing them to annex the Province of Tokar. An Egyptian civil and military government has been established there, and it is now said that the Province of Tokar is under the dominion of the Khedive. This policy is merely a means to an end, and this end is to recover the entire Soudan for Egypt. I have just been reading, in the Second Edition of the *Times*, some correspondence from the well-informed correspondent of that newspaper in Egypt. This gentleman lets the cat out of the bag. The *Times* correspondent says that the Egyptian Government are rejoicing because they see the possibility of going to Berber and laying hold of the Soudan again. The military party in Egypt has always desired this. That party consists mostly of Pashas. The Soudan was the feeding ground of these Pashas, and they hope that by again extending the Egyptian domination in the Soudan they will be extending the field of their depredations. Besides, there is in Egypt the greatest fear that Her Majesty's Government will retire. This feeling is not entertained by the fellaheen, but by the financiers. There is a large amount of money invested in different Egyptian enterprises, and the financiers try so to arrange matters that we shall be forced to remain in Egypt, now on one plea and now on another. They think that if they can induce us to assent to the Egyptians laying hold of the Soudan, they can inaugurate a frontier war, that they can push on to Berber and Khartoum, and so prevent us leaving the country. The matter is important to the British taxpayer. We have 3,000 troops in Egypt. The reason given for keeping them there is that they are to maintain order in Egypt. We are in Egypt to aid the Egyptian garrison in maintaining order, but if Her Majesty's Government allow the Egyptians to go on making wars of aggression, greater responsibilities are thrown on our troops, and the argument that we must remain in Egypt for the purpose of maintaining order there is stronger than ever. The feeling of the electors of this country has never been in favour of the occupation of Egypt. The Secretary for War asserted that the recent fight was a mere military operation necessary for the defence of Tokar; but the Committee must remember that Tokar is 55 miles away from Suakin, and that the argument that it is necessary to go so far afield in the defence of a fort, is equivalent to saying that it is necessary to annex Granada and Seville for the defence of Gibraltar. It is sheer hypocrisy for Her Majesty's Government to try and persuade this House and the country that this taking of Tokar was necessary to the safety of Suakin. The great argument in favour of keeping Suakin has always been that it can be secured and maintained alone. It has always been urged that it can be defended by a small garrison and by the guns of our Fleet. I wish to know whether Her Majesty's Government have, at any rate, now told the Egyptian Government distinctly that they must not go one step further, and that if they find themselves involved in difficulties they need not expect to be backed up by British troops? The policy which is being pursued now will one of these days land us in enormous expenditure. I believe that it will tend to keep us in Egypt, contrary to all the pledges we have given to foreign Governments. In 1884 the Conservatives in this House voted with me when I moved a Resolution protesting against the massacre of the Dervishes, but no sooner do the Conservatives come into power than—notwithstanding all the pledges they have given—they allow the Egyptians to go out and massacre a thousand Dervishes. Who does this country belong to? To the Soudanese, Egypt having abandoned it; and yet we are told that an Amnesty Proclamation has been issued by the Khedive. The Khedive might as well put out an Amnesty Proclamation in regard to London. He has no business in the Soudan. If he has taken the province there is no necessity for an Amnesty Proclamation, and as to the prisoners, the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs told us that they were exceedingly comfortable and happy, as they had been "deported to another place."

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I did not say they had been deported to another place, but that they had the choice of going home or staying where they were, and that they preferred to stay where they were.

MR. LABOUCHERE: They were wise in that respect; but a certain number of people were taken prisoners, and they were detained. Did these people prefer remaining in prison to going home?

*SIR J FERGUSSON: They remained at large.

MR. LABOUCHERE: What does that mean? Does it mean that they were to leave this Province of Tokar and go back to Khartoum?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I said we might hope that these people would be treated kindly if taken prisoners at Tokar, as others had been so well treated on the Nile. They preferred to remain where they were rather than return up the Nile.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Very likely. When their houses had been burnt down, and their wives and families had been slaughtered, they said, "You take care of us now." I want to know why the Egyptians went amongst these people? There is such a thing as International Law, and I ask whether, under that law, the Egyptians were justified in what they did? Did the country belong to them? If not, why did they go there and take prisoners and issue a Proclamation of Amnesty? All this was done with the consent of Her Majesty's Government. The real responsibility for these acts rests, not on the dummies in Egypt, but upon Her Majesty's Government. Unless a definite stand is made against these expeditions into the Soudan, the Egyptian Government will proceed further and further—urging, next, that it is necessary to the security of Tokar that Kassala should be taken, though it is 250 miles off, then that Berber should be occupied, and never resting satisfied until they get to Khartoum: having taken one Province they will be equally keen on taking another. In order to elicit from the Government a clear explanation of their policy, I beg to move a reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Item of £6,000, for the Foreign Office, be reduced by £100."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

(9.24.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): I should like to ask in what position do we stand towards the Central Government of the Soudan at Khartoum? Eight or nine years ago the Soudanese people of various tribes determined to get rid of Turkish misgovernment. They rose in rebellion, cleared out the Turkish Pashas, and have ever since been a self-governing country. The seat of Government has been in Khartoum, and in the Provinces they have had Emirs or Lieutenant Governors. Formerly we had a large trade with the Soudan, and that trade might be revived if Her Majesty's Government came to terms with the *de facto* Government at Khartoum. Why do Her Majesty's Government refuse to recognise that *de facto* Government? The fanaticism which characterised it in the first instance has been dying out, and I have no doubt it is perfectly prepared to come to terms with us and with other civilised Governments in order to obtain our commodities. I pointed out on a previous occasion that we are aiding and abetting the Egyptians in their race against the Italians to Berber and Kassala, and I see in a telegram in the *Times* a statement from a correspondent exactly confirming my view. The rule of the Turks and Egyptians in the Soudan was about the most horrible on earth; why do you not, therefore, recognise the *de facto* Government? It rules over hundreds of thousands of miles of fertile territory, populated by industrious people, and I think we ought to do what we can to come to terms with them.

(9.27.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): On the last occasion this subject was under discussion, after an ostentatious and aggressive silence, the right hon. Gentleman opposite wound up by saying we need not trouble ourselves

about this matter, as the territory was occupied solely and entirely for the defence of Suakin. The noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office advised people to study large maps. I want to know if the Under Secretary has studied large maps? I do not think he has, otherwise he would have avoided the error into which he has fallen. Tokar is 55 miles from Suakin, and since the capture of that place another fort 12 miles further on has been occupied, so that to secure the safety of Suakin the Egyptians have seized upon territory 67 miles away. In order to protect a small insignificant port, a territory as large as Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and part of Hampshire has been taken. You might as well say it is necessary to take that amount of territory from Spain in order to secure the defence of Gibraltar. The Soudan has been decimated by internecine feuds, and latterly by famine, the Egyptians having followed the doubtful policy of starving out the people by instituting a blockade. Since then the Egyptians have killed a large number of them, and have occupied their territory. When the famine blows over and they revive a little you will find these people as troublesome as they were 10 or 12 years ago. The rebellion in the Soudan gave rise to all these troubles in Egypt. I have no doubt the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary has deceived himself. He does not believe what is really the case. This is merely a part of our Jingo policy; and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will believe in the *Times*, which to-day publishes a telegram from Cairo, which regards the capture of Tokar as a first step towards the occupation of the Soudan. The telegram of the *Times* Correspondent says—

> "It is the general opinion in well-informed circles that the capture of Tokar is only part of a larger scheme, as, taken alone, it involves a considerable increase in the Soudan military establishment, and furnishes additional points for attack."

The Correspondent further states—

> "The capture of Tokar may be the first step towards the re-conquest of the Soudan, a measure which is becoming inevitable in consequence of the Italian progress towards the Nile, and is called for to relieve the peaceable inhabitants from the terrible cruelties inflicted under Dervish rule."

These are the ideas prevalent in Egypt, and will, if allowed by Her Majesty's

Government, continue to prevail. It is idle to say that this occupation of Tokar has been rendered necessary in the protection of Suakin, a place which could be defended by a gunboat and a single battalion. The occupation of Tokar is an extension of territory, which may lead to infinitely larger extensions, with the dangers consequent upon indefinite continuance there.

*(9.35.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I had hoped that the Debate which took place a fortnight ago on this subject would have sufficed, as on that occasion I replied with considerable fulness to all the arguments which were adduced. On the occasion of a second edition of that Debate, I did not think it necessary to repeat what I had said, but to avoid the criticism to which I was subjected, I will now briefly answer the points which have been again advanced. I am not concerned with the Nonconformist conscience, which was not particularly active when similar but far larger measures were taken by a former Government. The Member for Northampton has referred to declarations made six or seven years ago that the Soudan was abandoned. At that time, when the Egyptian troops were withdrawn from the Soudan excepting the ports on the Red Sea, Her Majesty's Government promised support to Egypt in retaining those possessions. That position has been maintained until the present time; but the Turkish Ambassador pointed out to Her Majesty's Government that the Sultan by no means relinquished his sovereign rights to the territories in that part of Africa, and that neither the Sultan nor the Khedive, his great feudatory, had ever abandoned his right to the Soudan. Consequently he is entirely within his rights in re-occupying that portion of the Soudan which, for special reasons, appears necessary. Her Majesty's Government only consented to the advance of the troops on Tokar, first, on the distinct assurance that there was no intention to proceed further; and, secondly on account of military necessity, caused by the constant annoyance of the Dervishes in the neighbourhood of Suakin. The Dervishes have never ceased their attacks, not merely upon that portion of the Soudan, but even upon Egypt itself. Consequently it cannot be said that the Egyptians are invading the Soudan and disturbing the *status quo* when a large Dervish force comes down the Nile for the purpose of invading Egypt.

MR. LABOUCHERE: What was the date of that force coming down the Nile?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: It was in 1890. The Member for Northampton wishes to know what attempts have been made to establish diplomatic relations with what he calls the Central Government in the Soudan. For my own part, I do not know that there is a Central Government established there. It is impossible to establish diplomatic relations with a person who about twice a year sends messengers down the Nile to warn all concerned, including the British General and Her Majesty herself, that unless they conform to the rule of the Mahdi he will sweep them off the face of the earth. With regard to the telegram in the *Times*, I may remark that no attempt to occupy such points as Berber and Khartoum will be possible without at least doubling the number of the Egyptian Army. The Committee may feel quite sure that the speculations of the *Times* Correspondent are unfounded, and that what he anticipated was a manifest impossibility. The Member for Northampton represents the Egyptians as having trespassed upon the liberties of the poor inhabitants by re-occupying that portion of the Soudan. The truth is that the inhabitants welcome the return of the Egyptian troops most cordially as a relief to the constant oppression to which they had been subjected for years past. The constant attacks made by the Dervishes on Suakin and the neighbourhood render the advance necessary, but it is intended that the movement shall stop. Even since the occupation of Tokar Her Majesty's Government have received information from Egypt than there is no idea of going any further. So far we have been able to do a great deal of good, and the people are in an infinitely better position than when we first went there. Far from the Egyptians seeking to victimise the Soudan in order to replenish their resources, all movements involving expenditure are avoided.

(9.45.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I will leave it to the right hon. Gentleman to settle the matter with the *Times* Correspondent, although I may say that, in my opinion, the *Times* Correspondent is generally correct in the information he furnishes, and seems to me to be a very well informed man. Living there, and occupying an important position, it seems to me that the *Times* Correspondent knows more of what is going on in Egypt and what the Egyptian Government are about than, with all due respect to the right hon. Gentleman and his chief, they do themselves. But the right hon. Gentleman seems to have put forward a very different view as to the abandonment of the Soudan to that which was put forward in 1884, when it was stated in the House by Her Majesty's Ministers that they had decided to abandon the Soudan. I remember very well reading the telegram from Sir Evelyn Baring, in which he said that we had abandoned the Soudan; and we have all heard of the pressure which was then used upon the Egyptian Government to induce them to abandon that region, the conditions upon which they were to do so being that for a certain time we should guarantee them Egypt and Suakin. I might remind the Committee that at that time rather than accept the policy of Her Majesty's Government two Members of the Administration resigned. Well, what happened? We continued to remain where we were, but we voted money in this House on the idea that the Soudan was to be abandoned. Now, however, the right hon. Baronet tells us that the Khedive never abandoned the Soudan; that the Sultan never abandoned it; that the Egyptians are there still. I ask, what for? They have not asked for or obtained the Sultan's permission, but we are told that they are acting on the assumption that they never did abandon the Soudan, and that that territory is part and parcel of Egypt. If this be so, it is evident that being allowed to keep possession of the Eastern Soudan they may before long go on to Berber, and then, if they like, extend their operations to Khartoum. The question to us is, whether it is expedient that they should be allowed to go there? From what the right hon. Baronet has said it is rendered still more probable than even is stated in the telegram of the *Times* Correspondent, that the Egyptians will ere long be dragged into some further enterprise in Kassala, and after that upon Khartoum. The right hon. Baronet treats what has happened as a mere military necessity, because he says we were obliged to take Tokar because we hold Suakin, and the Dervishes having established themselves in the Tokar district, it was necessary to take Tokar. Well, not only are we at Tokar, but we are building forts beyond that place. The Dervishes may attack those forts, and then it may be necessary for us to go still further. The result will probably be that we shall go on and on, until at last we have laid hold of the whole of the Soudan, just as it was formerly laid hold of by the Egyptians when Ismail was the ruler. The right hon. Baronet justifies the massacre of 1,000 Dervishes in the neighbourhood of Suakin, because a year ago the Dervishes attacked the Egyptians at Wady Halfa. Why were not those operations undertaken at that time? Simply because the Egyptian Government did not suppose that Her Majesty's Government would be so weak as to listen to the nonsense we hear about military necessities. Of course, the Government feel pretty sure of their position; they have the wealthy classes of this country at their back, and we know that they are in favour of the continued occupation of the Soudan. We see this in the organs of the Conservative Party, where we who oppose this occupation are blamed for merely hinting, however remotely, that under any possible contingency the British forces ought to leave Egypt. This being so, if the Government are anxious to make things comfortable for their followers, I have no doubt that within a year or so a further advance will take place beyond Tokar. I am told that we have discussed this matter before. That is quite true but we have been unable to get at the intentions of Her Majesty's Government, and I do not know that even after the speech of the right hon. Baronet we have been enabled clearly to ascertain what are the intentions and policy of Her Majesty's Government at the present moment. We shall probably still have to initiate many discussions on this question. There are other Votes on which Egyptian questions are involved, and until we get an assurance that the Government will maintain what should be our own place in Egypt and fall back on Suakin, it will be my painful duty to insist on dividing the House on every one of these Votes. There is one other point on which I wish to say a few words. I have already mentioned Manica——

THE CHAIRMAN: As the hon. Member is now opening a different topic, I would suggest that he should reserve that for another occasion.

*(9.55.) DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I wish, Sir, to call attention to a matter in connection with this Vote.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Pardon me. In answer to what the Chairman has said, I may say that I thought of taking both questions on the one Vote; but if he thinks I ought, as a matter of duty, to take another course, I have no objection to taking half a dozen Divisions.

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member for Glasgow is about to bring forward a matter connected with this Vote he would have precedence.

*DR. CAMERON: I desire to put a question to the right hon. Baronet in reference to a matter I brought forward the other day. I refer to the recent seizure of a vessel called the *Arbib Brothers* at Algiers. There was a claim against that vessel for salvage, and the French Court ordered the owners to lodge a sum of 150,000 francs in satisfaction of that claim, should it be established, and that, I believe, was done. The British Consul at Algiers had the matter brought under his cognizance, and pledged his word that the *Arbib Brothers* should not leave pending his decision; but the other party to the suit, the *Compagnie Transatlantique*, sent one of their ships with an armed crew alongside the *Arbib Brothers*, with the avowed object of preventing her from leaving by force, if necessary, an act which is strongly complained of. I wish to know whether the right hon. Gentleman will not make some remonstrances to the French Government against conduct which was certainly likely to have led to a breach of the peace and to international disagreement. The right hon. Gentleman told me the other day that no breach of the law had been committed; but, at any rate, there was a breach of the comity of the nations which might have led to international consequences. I was exceedingly dissatisfied with that answer. I think that had it been the case of a German vessel, or had a vessel belonging to any other nation been treated in that fashion, we should certainly have heard of a very strong protest. The matter was one in which Her Majesty's Government should have had no difficulty in sending a representation to a friendly nation. It is nonsense to say that there was the smallest chance of a disabled British vessel surreptitiously leaving a port like Algiers, with forts all round and garrisoned by a strong military force. I gave notice that I should call attention to this matter on going into Committee of Supply. As I may not have the opportunity of doing this, I hope the right hon. Gentleman will now say whether he has taken any steps in the matter.

*(9.58.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: I regret that I am unable to give the hon. Member any further information than I gave him on a previous occasion in answer to his question. I do not think the hon. Member has made any mis-statement of the facts, which are simply these: that a British ship broke down off Algiers, and called for assistance; a French steamer went out to render that assistance; then came a demand for salvage, which the captain did not feel justified in admitting without reference to the owners. Upon this, proceedings were taken without delay in Court, and on the representation that the ship was about to leave the harbour a seizure was made upon her, and steps taken to prevent her going to sea. A week afterwards a tug steamer arrived from England to take her home, where she could be more cheaply repaired than at Algiers; but the vessels of the company which had made the claim took the steps referred to to prevent her going to sea. No doubt the proceeding was very uncourteous and unnecessary, but it was not illegal; and owing to our not having a Consular Convention we could not regard what happened as a breach of Treaty. In fact, we have no grounds whatever for making formal representations on the subject to the French Government, there having been no actual breach of the law.

*Dr. CAMERON: Were those proceedings taken with the cognisance of the French Government?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: They were certainly not taken by the French Government; but I believe they could not have been taken with the cognisance of the local authorities. There was, however, no actual assault committed, and the mere fact that two merchant steamers anchored in the immediate vicinity of a disabled British steamer affords no real claim for redress.

(10.1.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I may now perhaps be allowed to refer to the question of Manica, and to the action of those who have received the charter to Mashonaland. I wish to obtain from the right hon. Gentleman some information in explanation of what has taken place. The operations of this Chartered Company are limited by the charter to Mashonaland and Matabeleland. By the proposed Treaty with Portugal, Manicaland was recognised as part and parcel of the Portuguese territory. By the Convention which was signed last August, after the Treaty fell through, it was agreed that the *status quo* should remain, and under that *status quo* a line was drawn which showed that Manicaland did not form part of the portion of Africa under British protection, but that it was regarded as Portuguese. Just at the very moment this Convention was being signed, this company having a number of deperadoes who had been enlisted in Mashonaland; and probably finding that there was no gold in that country, while they had heard that there was gold in Manicaland, crossed the frontier, where they found Portuguese officials, whom they laid hold of and sent away as prisoners to Cape Town, a distance of 1,600 miles. Then they established themselves in Manicaland, and made a Treaty with the Chief Umtassa. The right hon. Gentleman seems to despise the *Times* correspondence, but I do not despise it; and from that correspondence I find that Umtassa's stock-in-trade consisted of a second-hand pair of trousers and a cocked hat. And this was the Chief with whom these desperadoes made a Treaty. They induced him to hand over to them certain powers and rights to all mines and lands, and also the right to found banks. I think the word "banks" will show how this poor unfortunate Chief was humbugged, and I should like to know how they translated it to him. The Portuguese pleaded that they had effective occupation; that Mutassa was only a tributary to another Chief, whose concession to them was paramount. It is said that that concession has been repudiated. I do not believe a single word about that, because I think such statements are attributable to the special financial interests of private British investors. There is no doubt that these persons migrated from Mashonaland to Manicaland; that they established themselves there; that they are exercising powers of sovereignty there. It is very well for the right hon. Gentleman to say that this is not the case, but we have the correspondence before us. We know very well that by the Charter which was granted to the company it was stipulated that they were only to be allowed to exercise powers of sovereignty over that portion of the territory in which their mining rights were ceded to them by Lobengula on the condition that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs gave them permission. I asked the right hon. Gentleman the other day whether they had obtained that permission, and he said they had not. This means that these men are merely filibusterers. The Under Secretary for India, some time ago, in discussing the question of the Borneo Charter, said that a Chartered Company merely meant filibustering by proxy. That is my opinion of Chartered Companies. I believe these people have no sort of right to exercise power and influence in Manicaland under the terms of their Charter, because they have not got the permission of the Secretary of State. I asked the right hon. Gentleman a question to-night as to the arrest of a steamer which was going up the River Limpopo with arms on board, and he stated that it carried smuggled goods; but there is no doubt that the ship was going up to the aid of the filibusterers. This is a most serious matter, almost as serious as the capture of Tokar, because we may be dragged into a war at any time by these filibusterers. I see that the newspapers, including the *Times*, are to-day pointing out that the Portuguese have really no rights, and that we might oppress and crush them with impunity; but I would venture to point out that there is an

International Law which regulates these matters. Lord Salisbury is very fond of attacking weak Powers, and of cringing before strong ones.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I have not discovered yet what connection the remarks of the hon. Member have with this particular item.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I am finding fault with the conduct of Lord Salisbury, and moving a reduction of his salary as a sort of penal action in condemnation of his conduct. I believe that this is the usual way of proceeding.

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Member has not pointed to any conduct on the part of Lord Salisbury.

MR. LABOUCHERE: I am coming to that. Instead of protesting against this conduct, and telling the filibusterers that he will not give them any sort of protection, he appears, from the answers given to questions in this House, always to say that he has no knowledge of the matters complained of. He evidently does not want to hear anything against them. When we ask the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs "Has it come to your knowledge that certain facts which are known to everybody have occurred?" he replies, "We have received no sort of information." Now, Lord Salisbury is responsible for the acts of his subordinates. We ought not to be put off in this way. It shows me that Lord Salisbury is acting with this Chartered Company: he knows Portugal is a weak Power, and he is encouraging and abetting this company in attacking Portugal, enabling them to deport and put in prison Portuguese officials and those who send arms and ammunition through Portuguese territory contrary to Portuguese law. Under these circumstances, I do think that, before we agree to the salary which is proposed to be voted to Lord Salisbury, we should hear some explanation from the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs in regard to the position Her Majesty's Government have taken up in respect to these filibusterers.

(10.10.) SIR J. POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): I think that before my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton condemns the conduct of Lord Salisbury in Africa he should contrast it with that of his predecessor. I am bound to say, for my own part, as far as I know anything of Africa, that I approve the policy of Lord Salisbury far more than that of any other statesman who has preceded him. I wish, however, to ask the Government a question on this Vote in respect to a matter that I previously mentioned, but could then obtain no information about it. On February 24 one of the correspondents of the *Times* wrote a very interesting description of the conduct of the Russians in Warsaw, and in that correspondence we were told that no fewer than 46 political prisoners were treated with great cruelty—were tortured, flogged, and otherwise maltreated for merely political offences. I asked the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary at the time whether the Government had any information on the matter, and the answer was in the negative. Since then I have myself received evidence confirming the statements of the *Times* correspondent, and I therefore wish to again ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the Government have also received any confirmation of them, and, if so, whether Lord Salisbury has addressed any remonstrance on the subject to the Russian Government. I would remind the Committee that Lord Salisbury himself once, speaking in this House, and from the very seat now occupied by the hon. Member for Northampton, dwelt on the fact that, owing to our Treaty engagements respecting Poland—under the Treaty of Vienna, signed by Russia as well as England—we were bound, whenever the population of that part of the world suffered injustice at the hands of Russia, to protest against it. We know that from time to time that engagement has been acted on, and remonstrances made; and I hope that if the Government have received information on the matter referred to it will be resorted to in this case.

(10.15.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: We are all admirers of Lord Salisbury in matters in which his views coincide with our own. I am an ardent admirer of Lord Salisbury, except in two or three important particulars. The hon. Member for Kilkenny approves Lord Salisbury's policy in Africa, but seems to disapprove of it in Europe. I cannot help feeling that Lord Salisbury answered the hon. Member by anticipation the other day at a banquet, when he said that wrong might have been done to the Poles, but that, after all, if we remonstrated we might be told to mind our own business, and that if we interfered the last state of the poor people might be worse than the first. As regards Lord Salisbury's conduct in Africa, I am altogether an admirer of the noble Lord, though I think there must be something behind to induce Lord Salisbury to allow the Egyptians to act as they have done. With regard to Manicaland, I am no admirer of the Portuguese. All they are doing there is to try and run their company-mongers against our company-mongers. It is a case of diamond cut diamond, or "pull devil, pull baker." Still, I think there are some grounds for diplomatic decency. The Portuguese allege that they have a Treaty with Umtassa. The South Africa Company said the same. The parties met, and Umtassa had to decide which he preferred; and while Umtassa was sitting there on his Throne, the agents of the South Africa Company seized their opponents and carried them off. I certainly do think that Her Majesty's Government are bound to keep this company within bounds. If they do not do so, they will some day involve this country in grave responsibility. I hope the Government will insist that the South Africa Company shall not do things in such an extremely high-handed manner in the future.

(10.20.) Mr. CONYBEARE: I am not going to argue in defence of the Chartered Company or of any other company, but I do not think, so far as my observations of the facts have gone, the representations given of them to this House by the hon. Members for Northampton and Kirkcaldy have been accurate. The hon. Member for Northampton admitted that while the Convention was being signed the Portuguese representatives were seized by the agents of the Chartered Company. But if I understand the position correctly, there was a conflict of evidence as to whether Manicaland belonged to the Portuguese or to the company, and that question was being determined by the Home Authorities when the difficulty arose in Manica itself, and these proceedings occurred. I do not think the Chartered Company acted in defiance of any authority. They did nothing in contravention of their Charter, because, at the time they seized the agents of the Portuguese Company, they did not know what decision had been come to in this country, and therefore I would rather deprecate the somewhat vigorous denunciation which been levelled against our fellow-countrymen in South Africa. This question of the action of the agents of the Chartered Company was raised in this House last Session, and I ventured on that occasion to express my own opinion that if you are going to have concessionaires and company-mongers, or filibusterers, or gold prospectors to explore these countries, it is better that they should act under some recognised authority, and that they should be kept in check by means of the regulations of a company like the Chartered Company. I have taken the trouble to make myself familiar with some of those regulations, and it certainly seems to me that they have a direct tendency to promote good order and government in those territories over which they are authorised to exercise sway; and until far graver complaints are made out against the general conduct of the company, I shall, at any rate, hesitate to cast a stone against it, and shall not join with my hon. Friends in their denunciations. It appears to me that, as a whole, the policy which——

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! The hon. Member is wandering from the point before the Committee. The Committee is only concerned in the attitude of the Foreign Office in relation to these affairs.

Mr. CONYBEARE: I will not go into details of the dispute between the Portuguese and the agents of the Chartered Company. I only wish to ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs what is the position of the Government in the matter between the Portuguese and the Chartered Company? I cannot agree with my hon. Friends who have expressed so much admiration of Lord Salisbury's conduct on this or that point. I do not think there is one point on which I can join in admiring him. Now we are discussing the conduct of Lord Salisbury as Foreign Minister, and I should like to reiterate my strong opposition to his policy in connection with the African question generally; I am not going to traverse the grounds on which last year the Government gave way to Germany on every point in connection with the partition of East and Central Africa. When we consider the position of our territory north and south of the Zambesi and north of Albert Nyanza, and when we bear in mind the importance of having some connecting link between those two parts, I am sure we shall all deplore the blindness of Lord Salisbury in permitting the Germans by means of their new-fangled Hinterland doctrine to push in a wedge of German territory between our northern and southern territories. I said at the time that, in my opinion, it was a most fatal mistake, and I fear that in the future we shall have great cause to deplore this unfortunate step. Undoubtedly the right hon. Gentleman the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs cannot be expected to undo the mischief, but some steps might be taken to strengthen our position. There have been a good many rumours lately as to the operations of British subjects in Damaraland and Dutch territories, and there has been apparent a desire of the Germans to get rid of that portion of their possessions. Walfisch Bay remains isolated—a kind of oasis in the desert of German territory. The German territory in that part of Africa is known to contain in some parts very valuable copper mines, and also I believe a considerable amount of gold. I want to know from the right hon. Gentleman whether any information has reached him as to proposed operations by British subjects in that territory, and whether the German Government have expressed any willingness to enter into negotiations with this country for the purpose of giving over the whole of that territory in exchange for any other? At any rate, I think the Government ought to take some measures for the purpose of securing whatever rights we may possess in connection with Walfisch Bay. It may be desired to construct a line of railway to the copper-bearing districts to the North of Damaraland. If so, I hope Her Majesty's Government will do their utmost to secure for such British enterprise whatever protection and fair play may be needed. I hope the Government will not rashly or in too great haste concede to Portugal rights which English subjects have secured and are acting upon with great advantage to the people.

(10.34.) MR. ATKINSON (Boston): It would be very amusing if it were not so sad to hear political pigmies—to hear Members on the other side, one after another, speaking deprecatingly of the policy of a statesman like Lord Salisbury and proposing that his salary should be reduced. The idea of anyone trying to depreciate the foreign policy of the Government by even insinuating that the reduction of the salary of a statesman like Lord Salisbury would have any effect whatever, is too amusing to accept seriously. The Member for Northampton knows perfectly well that if he goes down to the City and inquires there, he will find that the prosperity of this country is founded on the foreign policy of the present Government; and if there is a point that is totally unassailable it is the foreign policy of Lord Salisbury. It is a policy that we are all proud of as Englishmen, and that makes us all the more enjoy every trip we take into every other country, because we know it is suhc a change from that policy which our friends on the other side would like to have restored. When their leader was in office nobody knew what the foreign policy would be for six months together. Gentlemen on the other side are indulging in constant wearying references to Turkish atrocities. Our friends opposite do not seem to think at all that Turkey was fighting side by side with us not very long ago, and they speak of the "unspeakable Turk" as if the word "unspeakable" did not apply to any offence committed in this country. There are unspeakable wretches in England as well as in Turkey. We hear nothing about the conduct of Russia towards the Jews from those who seem to think that Russia is our best friend. There are offences committed in all countries; and while we ought to use our influence to diminish those offences, we ought not to kick at those who are on friendly terms with us.

*(10.40.) SIR J. FERGUSSON: The hon. Member for Northampton has called attention to another branch of foreign policy in which, unfortunately, he finds his countrymen again in the wrong. It seems to be his constant view of the conduct of Englishmen all over the world that they are always in the wrong. I confess I begin always with a contrary predisposition. I am inclined to think they are in the right *primâ facie*, and I cannot reconcile myself to condemning them *primâ facie*. I do not think many hon. Gentlemen will agree with the hon. Gentleman who says he does not believe one word the South Africa Company may say. The hon. Member wishes to have a declaration from the Government as to the affairs of Manicaland. Recent events there are pretty well known. We were anxious to make arrangements with the Portuguese, and to avoid disputes with them in Manicaland. In August last a Convention equitable to both countries was concluded, but the Portuguese Government was not able to have the Convention ratified. Then a *modus vivendi* was agreed upon for six months. At the time when the collision between the agents of the South Africa Company and the Portuguese occurred this agreement was not known to them. The hon. Member says that the South Africa Company has violated its charter in exercising powers in Umtassa's country which have not been approved by Her Majesty's Government. The company's agents are not exercising any powers of sovereignty or administration in Umtassa's country. But as a large number of Europeans are, with the Chief's consent, following their vocations in the country, the police of the South Africa Company are, at Umtassa's request, keeping order in the country. I think that the Committee will see that until a definite settlement is arrived at, probably no better arrangement could be made. I am sorry to hear an hon. Member talking of our people there as filibusters; they are enterprising colonists in the same sense as our people have colonised great portions of the world. The Committee may be quite sure that Her Majesty's Government will keep faith both with foreign Powers, and with native Chiefs, and that no precipitate action will be taken. I think that in this House we should give credit to our own countrymen who are carrying on enterprises under considerable difficulty in a straightforward manner, and not call them by opprobrious names. My hon. Friend the Member for North Kilkenny (Sir J. Pope Hennessy) has referred to the question of the treatment of certain prisoners at Warsaw. Her Majesty's Government have no official information of the occurrences to which the hon. Member referred, and I think it is well that we should not interfere in the affairs of foreign countries unless our interference can be accompanied with some advantage, and I do not think that the experience of 1863 will lead the House to wish for interference in the affairs of Poland. Many statesmen in the House in 1863 entertained the idea of intervening in the affairs of Poland, and an attempt was made at combined action by several Powers with regard to the matter, but those efforts were abortive, and Russia has since 1831 disclaimed the right of foreign Governments to interfere in the affairs of Poland. The hon. Member for Camborne asked a question with regard to the state of things between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of Portugal. It is not customary to give information as to the progress of negotiations until they are concluded, and I must ask leave to follow that wholesome rule in this case, because, undoubtedly, when you have a game of some difficulty to play, it does not tend to your success to lay your cards on the table. Her Majesty's Government trust that the negotiations which are being conducted in a most conciliatory spirit will lead to a conclusion satisfactory to both countries.

(10.52.) DR. CLARK: After hearing the defence of the Government I am prepared to support the hon. Member for Northampton in his Motion to reduce the salary of the right hon. Gentleman by £200. We shall vote for that Motion in order to express our disapproval of the action of the Government in refusing to come to terms with Portugal, and to delimit our spheres of influence, and also for aiding and abetting the filibusters of the South Africa Company, in taking possession of a portion of Portuguese territory. The right hon. Gentleman does not like the term "filibuster." If he had read the papers of seven or eight years ago

Stellaland and other Republics were all formed by filibusters, whom we all denounced. But then they were Boers and were not organised, and had no charter from our Government. Since then we have organised filibusters and granted them a charter, and now when they actually take Portuguese territory we aid and abet them. That this territory does belong to the Portuguese is perfectly clear. In the Treaty of August last the River Limpopo was used as a boundary between the Portuguese sphere of influence and the British sphere of influence; the British sphere of influence was put west of the river, and the Portuguese east of the river. The Portuguese objected to that because it carried their boundary too far east; and under the present *modus vivendi* Manicaland is a portion of the Portuguese sphere of influence. Your legalised filibusters, by taking possession of this territory, have declared war against Portugal, and we have a lot of little unofficial wars carried on. Is this territory Portuguese, and have the Portuguese any right to it? They have been there for over 200 years. Five years ago, before this Chartered Company was promoted, the Mozambique Company had prospectors there. Three years ago three companies were formed in London to work some concessions granted by the Mozambique Company. The companies sent out their prospectors and took possession of this territory. We are told Umtassa has given a concession to the British Africa Company. Of course, he will give a concession to whoever will give him something to drink and a few presents. All the native Chiefs will do that. If the Germans came east they would soon get concessions from the Chiefs in our Protectorate, and they would have just as much right to take possession of Bechuanaland as we have to take Manicaland. Let us try the filibustering game with Germany. I cannot see why, because Portugal is a weak Power, we should aid and abet Mr. Rhodes in filibustering. What excuse can Her Majesty's Government offer for playing into the hands of this private company? A few Tory and Unionist Dukes control it, and they are now demanding that the Portuguese Government should build a railway for their convenience. Her Majesty's Government are laying down a condition that in order to save the company a route of 1,700 miles to Cape Town, the Portuguese shall place a railway at the disposal of the company by which they will get to the coast in 350 miles. At least this is so stated in the Portuguese papers, and I ask what right have our Government to make this demand on behalf of filibusters who have taken possession of Portuguese territory?

*(11.0.) Sir JULIAN GOLDSMID (St. Pancras, S.): I protest against the language used by the hon. Member for Caithness. Mr. Rhodes and other gentlemen who have taken part in colonisation work are no more filibusters than the hon. Member himself. The hon. Member has most unjustifiably endeavoured to prejudge the case which is now in dispute between Portugal and England—a case in which Portugal, I believe, is entirely in the wrong and England in the right — but the hon. Member is not justified by his position as a Member of this House in using language against his own country, and I hope we shall hear no more of such expressions in the House of Commons.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

*(11.2.) Mr. SCHWANN: I take this opportunity to call the attention of the Foreign Office to the imposition of the Paddy Tax in Ceylon. This has no reference to the Irish question. "Paddy," as some hon. Members will be aware, is rice, and paddy-growers are cultivators of rice-fields. The Paddy Tax presses severely on the poorest class of Cingalese cultivators—a loyal class of peasantry—who have a strong claim upon the consideration of Her Majesty's Government. The Paddy Tax is levied for the support of the general expenses of the Ceylon Government, and it is the only class of agriculture which pays such taxation. A planter may cultivate the cocoa-nut-palm, quinine, coffee, or tea, and no tax is payable thereon. I believe this question concerning the paddy-growers has been before the House on more than one occasion, and I should not have ventured to dwell upon the subject now, but for the fresh evidence which has recently been laid before the Legislative Council of Ceylon

with reference to the sufferings of the poorer class of cultivators in the Island. The information on this subject from Mr. F. C. Fisher, Government Agent of Province of Uva, Ceylon, has been published in the Ceylon newspapers, and doubtless has been now laid before Her Majesty's Government. By the personal exertions of this gentleman, and at the special request of the Governor, this evidence was collected a short time ago and was put before the Governor, and by him submitted to the Legislative Council of Ceylon. I venture to quote the following extracts from Mr. Fisher's Report, dated October 31, 1890. He says:—

> "Returning to Uva in 1887, after an absence of 17 years, I was quite shocked to see the change in the condition of the people, with which I had been well acquainted. The signs of general poverty were unmistakable, and some of the chiefs, even, with difficulty kept up appearances, while the poorer classes were ill-clothed and in many cases underfed."

Let me point out that it is an aggravation of the needy position of the cultivators that the Government, allowed arrears of the tax before 1882 to accumulate, then ordered the arrears and annual taxes of 5 years to be collected in 3½ years, at the very time when Ceylon was suffering from the ruin which had fallen upon coffee plantations through a parasitic disease (insects and fungus) which infected the plants. Nearly every coffee plantation was ruined, and the paddy-growers had hitherto relied almost entirely on the cultivation of small patches of coffee to supply the tax on their paddy-fields. Just at the time when Ceylon was suffering intensely from this coffee failure, I repeat the Government insisted on gathering in the arrears of taxation, and in cases of default land was ruthlessly confiscated and sold by public auction. Mr. F. C. Fisher made personal inquiries as to the result of this oppressive action, and in one district alone he mentions that the effect has been to deprive 2,930 heads of families of their possessions, and, taking the family average as five persons, 14,650 persons or 49 per cent. of the inhabitants of this one district, were reduced to the greatest distress. As the paddy-fields occur frequently in other districts throughout the Island it is not an over-estimate to suppose that in

29,000 instances lands have by this action of the Government agents passed into the hands of Moormen, Tamils, and others. This is much to be regretted for many reasons. It is possible that the Colonial Office may intend to pass some measure for the amelioration of the sad condition of the rice growers in Ceylon; and the Governor (Sir A. Havelock), I am sure, weighing all the details put before him, will give judicious advice to Her Majesty's Government. The tax amounts to about a tenth of the produce of the fields, and some years ago this tenth was paid in kind; but in the belief that it would improve the position of the paddy-growers, the tax was commuted into money payments. This has been found to work strongly against the interest of the growers, because they have found difficulties in finding near markets for their produce, and through the unscrupulous action of middlemen, have had to suffer severe losses in their slender incomes. Proposals to abolish the Paddy Tax have been met by the objection that this can only be done by the substitution of a general Light Land Tax all over the Island. This may have to be carried out, but as the amount the tax yields is £75,000 annually, it is quite possible that some other source might be found for the income required. It is not necessary for me to enter into any detailed statement of the proper course to be taken. I am quite sure the Legislative Council could devise a fitting substitution should the tax be abolished. It has been proved that 5 per cent. duty which exists on imported rice for revenue purposes cannot be considered a protective tariff. I only bring the matter forward now in the hope that the Under Secretary for the Colonies will be able to give an assurance that the complaints of these impoverished peasantry of Ceylon will not be allowed to pass unheard. One other question arises in connection with the Defence Fund required from Ceylon. I believe that Her Majesty's Government have telegraphed that the sum required will, within a year or two, amount to £100,000, a heavy sum from so small a colony, and I hope the Government will re-consider their decision. The fact is, a few years ago, the Ceylon Government offered a reasonable sum towards the defence of the colony, and in doing so their conduct stood out in strong contrast to the attitude of other colonies, such as Jamaica, which steadily refused taxation for its own defence. Ceylon, however, offered to pay what was reasonable, and the inhabitants now feel that advantage is being taken of their loyalty by the Home Government. I hope it may be possible for the right hon. Gentleman to give some assurances of a favourable nature on this point. I daresay he has seen reports of language reported to have been used by gentlemen of responsible position in the Island, namely, that they fear more the rapacity of the Home Government than that of any enemy at all likely to attack Ceylon. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will consider these claims, which are urged on behalf of the people of one of the most loyal of our colonies.

(11.15.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: The hon. Member has not moved a reduction, and I am anxious to move the reduction, of which I have given notice, and to narrow the discussion upon the Colonial Vote. There are one or two other questions I should like to ask, though I have no wish to raise serious discussion upon matters which may be more adequately dealt with under the regular Votes in Supply—if we do reach Supply—before the closing days of the Session. With regard to the Paddy Tax, there are complications upon which I shall be glad if the Under Secretary can throw some light, but I must express my entire dissent from the idea that it is not the duty of Ceylon to pay for its own defence. I am very sorry that my hon. Friend should have seemed to express any sympathy with the impudent language—for so I must call it—of colonists who choose to consider the claim for their own defence a rapacious demand from the Home Government. India pays for her own defence, and there is no reason why Ceylon should not assist; and when reference is made to the action of other colonies, all I can say is, two blacks do not make a white. As a fact, Mauritius does pay handsomely for its defence, and so does Singapore and the Straits Settlements. Jamaica does not, but I hope influences will be brought to bear to induce a more reasonable attitude. But now I turn to another part of the world, and have to ask a question in reference to Newfoundland. We are promised Papers in reference to the fisheries dispute there, and, therefore, I will not raise that question now, only I will say that Her Majesty's Government are now following a course which is exactly that I would desire them to follow. But there is another matter I wish to refer to which may or may not be connected with the Newfoundland Fisheries dispute. We were taken by surprise the other day when an hon. Member asked what to me seemed a strange question, and received what I consider a somewhat startling answer. The question was whether Her Majesty's Government had in contemplation the guaranteeing a loan of £2,000,000 to Newfoundland. It was to be expected that the answer would have been that this was a rumour, only based upon imagination; but to my astonishment the answer was that under certain conditions the Government proposed to recommend Parliament to guarantee such a loan to the colony. Now, this is a serious matter, and it is surprising that this answer has not excited more public attention. I do not know another instance in which we have guaranteed a large loan for a self-governing colony. Under special circumstances, I believe we did guarantee a loan for Canada, but that was under very peculiar circumstances and in days long gone by. Of all colonies Newfoundland least deserves such a favour, because it has been influenced by a lot of speculators, who attempted, by blustering disloyalty, to force the Government into a collision with France. Although this is a Government of sops and bribes, I should be reluctant to believe that it would give a sop to Newfoundland to induce that colony to assent to the arbitration of the matters in dispute with France. I should like to know under what circumstances Her Majesty's Government are prepared to guarantee this loan, and whether the undertaking to give that guarantee has any connection with the proposal to refer the fisheries dispute to arbitration. There is another matter in connection with the Colonial Office as to which time presses. We have been told that Her Majesty's Government have already consented to give responsible government to the colony of Natal, and we have also been told that it is not an occasion in which Parliament can interfere. We are in fear, therefore, that the matter will be concluded before Parliament has had an opportunity of discussing it. I am glad to see that some hitch has arisen between the colony and Her Majesty's Government, and the matter may have to be referred home again, and it is perhaps not so pressing as it would otherwise be. But, however, the Under Secretary for the Colonies has declared that it is not a matter within the cognisance of Parliament, and, therefore, I may take this opportunity of expressing my view in relation to this matter. Her Majesty's Government are prepared to give a representative Government to Natal, and that means giving 37,000 whites —men, women, and children all told— absolute power over 500,000 natives. No provision for the protection of the coloured people is worth the paper it is written upon after we have given a colony self-government. We have never given such control before in our colonial history. When self-government was given to colonists in America, New Zealand, and Australia, the Aborigines were a mere handful compared to the white settlers. But a very different state of things prevail in South Africa, and I think that any man who has followed the history of colonial affairs there will recognise the dangers that may arise from the colonial treatment of powerful native races and the necessity for our armed interposition in the troubles that may follow. At the same time, I should like to have some more information in regard to the Natal tariff, and I cannot but express my opinion that Her Majesty's Government seem to have handed themselves over body and soul, so far as South Africa is concerned, to Mr. Rhodes, in his several capacities of Premier of Cape Colony, head of the South Africa Company, and head speculator and company promoter in South Africa. On this subject I saw a letter recently in the *Scotsman*, from a gentleman with whom I do not always agree, Mr. Arnold Forster, and he puts this case very strongly. Then, again, I should like to have the view of the Government in reference to the continuation of the offices of Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner, in one person; and I fear that the High Commissioner loses that independence he should preserve. What has happened in regard to this question? You sent to Swaziland a Cape partizan, and he forced upon the Transvaal this highly protective Customs Union, so that Natal is obliged either to raise its high tariff or remain out in the cold. The Colonial Secretary admitted that that would be the effect of the operation. He admitted that if the Transvaal is forced into this union against its will Natal must either admit its goods free or submit to a double tariff, to the ruin of its trade and revenue. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £1,000, part of the item at the top of page 3, for the Colonial Office.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Item of £7,000, for the Colonial Office, be reduced by £1,000."—(*Sir George Campbell.*)

(11.33) SIR R. LETHBRIDGE (Kensington, N.): I wish to suggest in one or two words to the right hon. Gentleman that there really is a true case of hardship in the matter raised by the hon. Member for Manchester, with reference to the imposition of any further tax or burden for military defence on the colonial funds of Ceylon. The hon. Member for Kirkcaldy said there was a certain amount of rapacity exhibited by colonials in objecting to this payment for their own defence. The hon. Member is evidently not aware of the particular circumstances under which this military expenditure is imposed on the revenues of Ceylon. The chief reason for the imposition of the burden is that Ceylon has to provide for the defence of the great port of Trincomalee, which is not especially a Ceylon port in any degree. It is one of the head-quarters of the Imperial Navy in Indian waters. It is one of the most important ports for our commerce in the world; and it is regarded as a considerable hardship by all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in Ceylon that they should be called upon to furnish so large a proportion of the funds for the military defence of what is simply a great headquarter station in

Indian waters. I should like to say one word on another matter that was referred to by the hon. Member for Manchester, and that is the proposal that Her Majesty's Government should instruct the Government of Ceylon to abolish the Paddy Tax. People used to suppose that this was a tax on Irishmen in Ceylon, but, in reality, it is a tax on one of the great necessities of life—a tax on the rice consumed by the native population; everybody would be extremely glad if some means could be found of abolishing the tax—a means which would not impose greater burdens on the industry of the country in other directions. It seems to me that the hon. Member who objects to the tax has not suggested any means by which the vacuum occasioned by the abolition of that tax could be filled without seriously injuring the colony. It has been suggested that heavier burdens should be directly placed upon the land, but I can conceive nothing which would more seriously throw back the prosperity of the colony than such an attempt as that, and I trust Her Majesty's Government will not listen to any such suggestion. I should be most happy to join with the hon. Member in advocating any means of doing away with the Paddy Tax, if it can be shown that the colony revenues can do without that tax, without imposing something infinitely worse on the people.

(11.38.) MR. LABOUCHERE: As it is now nearly a quarter to 12 o'clock, I will postpone to a more favourable opportunity some criticisms I had intended to make with regard to the connection of the Government with the South Africa Company, than which a more scandalous financial company never existed since the days of the South Sea Bubble. The Government have encouraged unfortunate widows of clergymen and orphans to provide resources for this bogus company, and that adds another to the many reasons why it will be necessary to deprive this country of the glory of being governed by the present Administration at the next General Election.

*(11.40.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Government fully recognise the great importance of the subject introduced by the hon. Member for Manchester. The late Governor of Ceylon appointed a local committee to consider the whole question of the Paddy Tax, and it is now under the consideration of the Secretary of State. The tax itself appears a heavy one; but, as the hon. Member for Kensington has pointed out, there is this great difficulty that, if it is taken away, another tax will have to be found to take its place. I may remind the hon Member that the tax was estimated to produce in 1890 nearly 1,000,000 rupees. The question of repealing the tax is not yet settled, and the present Governor is considering the matter most carefully. As to the defence of Ceylon the hon. Member for Manchester says the colony suffers a hardship by having to contribute a considerable sum. I am not often in accord with the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, but in this case I am. I think the colony ought to contribute to the cost of its own defences. The Secretary of State received a very important deputation from the colony not long ago, and pointed out that he did not see his way to releasing them from paying towards Imperial and colonial defence. It is said that Trincomalee is an important harbour, and that it is really the head-quarters of Her Majesty's Navy in the Indian Ocean. That is not the case. The principal harbour is Bombay; and even supposing that it were as important as it is said to be, that would not be a fair ground for relieving the colony from all necessity of contributing towards the cost of its own defence. As to another question raised by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy, he seems to think that the action of the Government in granting a Constitution to Natal is on all fours with their action in regard to Western Australia.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I said exactly the contrary.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: Then I beg the hon. Member's pardon. I would point out that it was necessary to submit the Western Australia Act to the House. In order to repeal an existing Act dealing with the disposition of the land in the colony——

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I do not dispute the question of law or the necessity of coming to this House. I spoke on the matter of expediency.

*Baron H. de WORMS: There is a material difference between the two cases. In the matter of the Cape, when responsible Government was granted her in 1872, the procedure was precisely similar to that now proposed. The Imperial Parliament was not asked to intervene, and the matter never came before Parliament at all. We know from telegraphic information we have received that the Natal Constitution Bill is on its way here. We do not know the particulars of it, but we have every reason to believe that there are certain points in it with which Her Majesty's Government will be unable to agree. In all probability, when the Bill arrives here it will be referred back to Natal for alteration and revision. Her Majesty's Government, however, do not intend to go back from their consent to grant responsible Government to Natal provided due security is given for the protection of the interests of the coloured people. When those instructions are carried out to the satisfaction of Her Majesty's Government, then, and then only, will the consent of Her Majesty's Government be given to the Bill in question. The hon. Gentleman asks whether, prior to that consent being given, we will lay the Bill before the House. My answer is, No, we will follow the precedent set in the case of the Cape, and if hon. Members are not satisfied with the action of the Government in the matter, they can take us to task in the manner provided for by the forms of the House.

Sir G. CAMPBELL: Shall we have the Papers?

*Baron H. de WORMS: I cannot pledge myself to present any. The Government will not withdraw their consent to the Bill if the conditions they have laid down in regard to the protection of the coloured population are complied with. I do not think the Committee would wish me to go into the question of the Customs Union at this late hour. I can only say that there is a Convention with regard to Swaziland, under which the Transvaal Government binds itself to certain terms for three years to come. The Union exists between Cape Colony, the Orange Free State and Bechuanaland, and the Government having agreed to it the hon. Member surely would not wish us to go beyond it. If within three years the Transvaal does not join the Union its terms can be abrogated.

(11.59.) Sir G. CAMPBELL: My mind is a great deal relieved by the statement that if the Bill is not considered satisfactory it will have to go back to Natal. If the Government does not give Parliament an opportunity of discussing the question, I hope that opportunity which we can take for ourselves will arise. The right hon. Gentleman referred to the circumstances under which responsible Government was given to the Cape. There are many people who think that is an example to be avoided, and that self-government was given in that case without sufficient provision having been made for the interests of this country or for the interests of the natives. In the Cape you have a white population of something like 500,000. In Natal the coloured population out-numbers that of the white people by a great deal more than 10 to 1. I would point out that it is not the Transvaal that insists upon the part of the Convention relating to the Customs Union. The Transvaal would be delighted to get rid of that part of the Convention, the hardship which that State labours under in this respect having been brought to my notice by General Krüger. I should like the right hon. Gentleman to give us some explanation regarding the loan to be guaranteed to Newfoundland. Is the guarantee connected with the arbitration regarding the fisheries; and, if not, what are the circumstances which have led the Government to adopt the very unusual course of offering a guarantee to a particular colony?

*(11.53.) Baron H. de WORMS: What I said was that such proposals had been made, but no definite decision had been arrived at.

Dr. CLARK: The question regarding the Transvaal is a very important one. If the Convention is put in force and the Transvaal joins the Customs Union, the railway will not pay working expenses, and Natal will probably be made bankrupt. We have not yet heard any reason why British people who have lent money to Natal should have their security taken away from them. It is not that the Transvaal desire it, because they have been forced into the agreement against their will. The reason why the Orange Free State joined the Customs Union was that the Cape Government gave it several millions of money and built all its railways. I should like to know why this agreement has been forced on the Transvaal to the injury of Natal. I differ from my hon. Friend the Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell) in reference to guaranteeing responsible Government for Natal. I think that a responsible Government in Natal will be the best thing possible for Natal and for South Africa. I believe that if the people of Natal were compelled to pay for their own wars, the conflicts with native races would cease in the same way as such conflicts ceased in New Zealand, when the Imperial troops were withdrawn and the people were given to understand that in future they must pay for their own wars. One is always astonished at the ignorance of Her Majesty's Ministers. Everybody who reads the papers have seen the telegrams which have been published about the Bill, but the Government say they know nothing definitely about it. I regret very much to hear from the right hon. Gentleman that it is probable the Bill which has been adopted will not be sanctioned. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will tell us the special points of interest which the Government desire to see conserved and which are not conserved by the Bill. Do they desire that the 30,000 Hindoos who are in the colony, and who are in about equal proportions with the white population, shall have a vote? Then in what position do the Government wish to place the 400,000 or 500,000 natives? Are they to have the vote in the same fashion as the natives have in the Cape Colony? If so, 99 per cent. of the people in Natal will repudiate your gift of responsible Government.

*(11.55.) BARON H. DE WORMS: I must refer the hon. Member to the answer I have already given. The Bill is not yet in our hands. We may have seen reports about it, but it is obviously impossible for me to discuss the provisions of the measure with the imperfect knowledge at our disposal.

DR. CLARK: Why should you, before you get the Bill, practically censure the Natal Legislature for its action.

*BARON H. DE WORMS: I said that Her Majesty's Government have reason to believe that there are certain provisions in the Bill which they will not agree with. I decline to say what those provisions are, or to have them drawn from me by a process of cross-examination.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

(12.0.) MR. KELLY: I wish to call attention to the position of a certain class of public servants known as Civil Service writers. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton on the 21st June, 1886, said there was a strong grievance in the case of the writers.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I expressed that opinion before the Royal Commission was appointed.

MR. KELLY: I am aware that since reading the Report of the Royal Commission the right hon. Gentleman must have altered his opinions. Perhaps he will tell us the origin of the paragraph which specially deals with the question. Who are the writers? They are a body of men who are supposed to be employed on temporary service in the public offices and had to submit themselves to a certain examination—not a severe one, I admit—but still hard enough to permit of only 310 out of 1,280 passing in 1881. What is the character of their work? They do work of the same description as that of the Second Division clerks, and they even teach the Lower Division clerks to do the work on which they are employed. Their pay is practically 10d. an hour, fixed on the supposition that the work of these writers shall be purely mechanical in its character. I am quite aware that I shall be corrected now, as last year, when I said that the great majority of these writers do not earn £100 a year. The right hon. Gentleman said they earned £150, but he was misinformed. I have no hesitation in repeating that the average income is less than £100. Many of these writers have been employed for 15 years in the same office. It has been admitted that a considerable proportion of them do work which it was never intended to be done by them. Previous to 1870 the heads of Departments had the power, and exercised it in every instance, of recommending writers for increase of pay. But the system of writers has always led to dissatisfaction, and it would be best to reduce the number of such clerks to a minimum. The Playfair Commission of 1874 reported against the system, and advised that the lowest class of permanent work should be entrusted to an organised class of properly paid clerks. As the result of this recommendation 535 men out of 2,000 received permanent appointments; and a similar course of action now would go far to satisfy the just claim of the Civil Service writers. Unfortunately, the system of Civil Service writers, condemned over and over again, still continued. Indeed, things went on much the same for 11 years, at the end of which period there was a Petition to the Treasury, backed up by 120 Members of this House, The result was the Treasury Minute of December 1st, 1886. If that had been carried out, the writers would have had no cause of complaint; but, as a matter of fact, the most limited interpretation was put upon that Minute, and no benefit whatever has been derived from it. And now I come to the Report of the Commission on the Civil Service Establishments, which declared that the writers had established no grievance which it was the duty of the State to remedy. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton is one of those who are responsible for that paragraph. I would invite the House to consider the meaning of this paragraph. It does not say that the Civil Service writers have no just claims or moral right to an improvement in their position; it merely says that the writers have established no grievance which it is the duty of the State to remedy. That is not the question. The question is whether they have been treated unjustly, and whether they have not by continuous service established a claim, not for justice only, but for some sort of liberal treatment. I should like to know the history of this paragraph in the Report, and how it came there. I am informed on good authority that it did not appear in the original draft, and that probably, if the Commissioners had thought the effect of it would be to injure the position of the writers, it would never have appeared. Taking it for what it is worth, the Playfair Commission reported against the present system and strongly in favour of a change under which the writers should be treated as a properly paid and organised set of clerks. [*Cries of* "Oh, oh!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*]. It is rather hard for an hon. Member to be met by these continued interruptions from his own side, but it seems that no one ever receives support from the Government side of the House in pleading the cause of the poorer men. If I were speaking on behalf of the higher officials of the Service I should, no doubt, be well supported on the Government Benches. Let me, however, ask what is to be done under the Treasury Minute which was looked forward to with hope by the writers. As it is there are 11,000 writers, and of these only 82 have received permanent appointments in spite of the fact that several hundreds were recommended for such appointments by the heads of Departments, men who well know the work which the writers are capable of doing. Another grievance is that one of the great arguments against doing anything for the writers is the temporary character of their employment. Does the Committee think that if that were so elaborate provision would be made for 42 years of continuous service, including the rise of a man at a 1d. per hour more per year, which is to be continued up to £50 a year? These writers suffer cruelly as compared with the Second Division Clerks, especially in the matter of sickness. The utmost sick leave to which a writer is entitled per year is 28 days, and he has 16 days given in three-quarters pay, after the 28 days he can get no leave at all, except by losing his pay altogether. In a recent case a man had a few days leave, but there being an infectious disease in his house he was bound to remain away from his employment for a period of six weeks, during the greater part of which he had to sacrifice his pay, and thereby was deprived of the means of providing bread for himself and family. Had this been the case of a Second Division clerk he might have stayed away six months add still received his pay. A more unjust distinction as between two classes of men it is almost impossible to conceive. I shall conclude by moving the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £100, and in doing so I would make this appeal to the Secretary to the Treasury: if the right hon. Gentleman will agree to the appointment of a Parliamentary Committee to inquire into the writers' claims, or if he will even undertake to make that inquiry himself, the writers will cheerfully, and with implicit confidence, abide the result of his or the Committee's determination.

*(12.12.) The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): I am sorry that my hon. Friend has used as an argument a statement that there is a disposition on the part of the House to treat one class of the Civil Service differently from another. I believe, from my Parliamentary experience, that there is no shadow of foundation for such a statement.

Mr. KELLY: I spoke amidst constant interruptions last year on this subject.

*Mr. JACKSON: But my hon. Friend chose a very curious time for bringing forward the subject.

Mr. KELLY: I had no option in the matter.

*Mr. JACKSON: But my hon. Friend will admit that there are times when the House is impatient even when he is addressing it. There are certain rules governing the Civil Service which must be obeyed, and consistently with these rules I am anxious to do what I can for the writers. They enter the Service as temporary servants, and most of them enter at an age when it is perfectly competent for them to enter for the regular examinations of the Civil Service. An additional period of years has even been given them in which to pass the examinations. Parliament has been very strict in insisting that the Civil Service should be entered only by competitive examination; and if the writers cannot pass these examinations the Government would not be right in passing incompetent men into the Service. The question having been so recently inquired into by the Royal Commission to which the hon. Member has referred, it is hardly necessary for the House again to constitute a Committee of Inquiry. I most certainly, so far as I am concerned, cannot undertake to make further inquiries than those I have made, and which I deem to have been sufficient. I know that in consequence of a Minute which I had written a considerable sum in excess of former amounts was distributed. My hon. Friend knows there is no class of labour so cheap, so badly paid, and in such large supply as that of men who do simply copying. My hon. Friend would lead the House to believe that these men only get 10d. an hour. He knows that is not the case.

Mr. KELLY: I said that a certain number received 1s. an hour.

*Mr. JACKSON: The hon. Gentleman, then, would have the House believe that very few of these officers get more than 1s. an hour. Taking the day's work at seven hours, at 1s. an hour, the week's wage would be 42s. Let us see what are the real facts. I have obtained from the Civil Service Commissioners a statement showing the earnings of 733 of these clerks, and I think that will modify the judgment and opinions of the hon. Member as to what proportion of the men get 10d. or 1s. an hour. I take it 10d. an hour amounts to £78 a year. Now, according to this Return there were 38 whose earnings were not more than £78 a year; 122 earned between £78 and £90; 156 between £90 and £100; 122 between £100 and £110; 120 between £110 and £120; 64 between £120 and £130; 35 between £130 and £140; 19 between £140 and £150; and 57 over £150 a year.

Mr. KELLY: The right hon. Gentleman speaks as if these men work only seven hours a day; but, as I stated last year, men are slaving their lives out in order to earn £150. How much of the money he has referred to was paid for overtime?

*Mr. JACKSON: I think my hon. Friend is aware that in a good many offices I have introduced the system of piece work, by which men are paid not for their time, but according to the amount of work they do. I again say I feel that this question has been thoroughly investigated, and I cannot promise to do more than I have done. It is true that the Heads of Departments did send in a large number of names of men who were recommended for increase of pay, and a Committee was appointed to examine the work of each man so recommended.

When it was found he was doing work of a higher character than fairly belonged to his class, the pay was increased. I think full justice has been done. Not only have I frequently expressed sympathy with these men, but I have evidenced it in a practical form by adding largely to their incomes.

(12.38.) MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): The right hon. Gentleman has given the Committee some valuable information as to the earnings of the writers, but cannot he follow it up by ascertaining the number of hours worked by each man? If he does, it may turn out that the information he has given is somewhat misleading. From what I have heard, men often have to work far into the night in order to earn £100 or £150 a year, and then the money is hardly earned indeed. If the right hon. Gentleman will promise to get this information I hope the hon. Member for Camberwell will withdraw his Motion.

*(12.49.) SIR J. PULESTON (Devonport): I feel sure the right hon. Gentleman will have no difficulty in giving way to the appeal just made. There can be no question as to the desirability of getting this information. Whatever the right hon. Gentleman may do, the fact remains that the belief has been encouraged that the writers are permanent Civil Servants, and if we recognise this most of the difficulty may be overcome.

*(12.40.) MR. JACKSON: I cannot undertake to do anything of the kind. It is quite impossible to ascertain how many hours these men worked.

MR. THEOBALD (Essex, Romford): I think the grievance of these writers is that they are called upon to do the work of second class clerks, but are not placed in the same category as those officials.

(12.41.) MR. CREMER: I do not think it is impossible to get the information. Surely each man knows perfectly well how many hours he works at home, and the right hon. Gentleman can easily obtain the number of hours worked in the office. These men consider, rightly or wrongly, that they have a grievance, and are anxious to get it redressed. I, too, am desirous of getting rid of the feeling of dissatisfaction which prevails among them. I believe the right hon. Gentleman is not disposed to treat them harshly, and, therefore, I hope he will get the information asked for.

(12.42.) MR. CONYBEARE: I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give what we ask. These men, although entered as temporary servants, are not continued as such.

*MR. JACKSON: Indeed, they are.

MR. CONYBEARE: But they are liable to be dismissed at an hour's notice. Although they are temporary clerks they are required to do the work of permanent second class clerks. Some of these temporary clerks have been in the Service 42 years; I believe that, as a matter of fact, 90 per cent. have been in the Service upwards of 20 years. Will the right hon. Gentleman grant a Return showing the number of years these men have been employed? As to the dealing with the recommendations of Heads of Departments, what occurred was that the views of those gentlemen were simply overridden by a few minor officials. I think the hon. Member for Camberwell was perfectly justified in bringing this matter forward.

(12.50.) MR. KELLY: Reference has been made to the bonus system. May I point out that until a man has served eight years he gets no bonus, and after that he gets a bonus rising £1 10s. a year until it reaches the maximum of £50. Therefore, before he is entitled to the £50 bonus he must have served 42 years.

*(12.52.) MR. JACKSON: The bonus plan was adopted on my suggestion, and I recommended the limit of £50.

Question put, and negatived.

Original Question again proposed.

*(12.53.) MR. ROWNTREE (Scarborough): I shall not now enter at length into the subject of which I gave notice early in the evening; but in view of a future opportunity, when it can be adequately discussed, I wish to ask the President of the Local Government Board three questions. In the first place, why Quarter Session Boroughs are to be denied the reasons for the decision of the Local Government Board on their cases, whilst the Royal Commissioners, who were adjusting similar differences

between the Counties and County Boroughs, were giving to the public clear and full reasons for their decisions? Secondly, is it really to be understood that the Department refused to the Quarter Session Boroughs affected not only the reasons of the decisions, but even the facts as they relate to other boroughs similarly situated? In that case I can only say the facts will be ascertained, but at an amount of trouble and inconvenience which I submit we should not be put to by a Public Department. And, thirdly, will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table coloured maps showing the result of the decisions of the Board?

*(12.54.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The hon. Gentleman asks me three questions. The first is, what is the basis upon which we have settled the financial relations between counties and Quarter Sessions boroughs with regard to main roads. The hon. Gentleman knows that any Quarter Sessions borough which is aggrieved with a decision on the part of the County Council with regard to main roads within the borough may appeal to the Local Government Board. It is the duty of the Local Government Board, when such an appeal is made to it, to send down an Inspector to examine into the details of the case. The Inspector makes his Report to the Local Government Board, who, on that Report and after taking into consideration all the facts of the case, come to a decision. Then the hon. Gentleman asks on what principles we act. Well, we have to decide as to whether or not particular streets within the borough may be fairly considered to be main roads or not, and whether we shall so vary the order of the County Council as to include a larger mileage of main roads within the borough than the County Council think right. In deciding that question we have to consider whether the street which the borough desires to declare a main road is a street which is mainly used for local traffic, or whether there is a sufficient amount of through traffic to enable us to come to the conclusion that it is a main road. In the Scarborough case, the Local Government Board decided very much more favourably to the borough of Scarborough than to the County Council, as we included a greater length of street within the borough, as a main road, than the County Council wished us to do. I am very sorry we could not go the whole length the borough desired. What was desired by the borough was that a great length of street in the borough—amounting, if I remember rightly, to a mile and a half—should be declared to be a main road. It was represented to us that the traffic along that street was mainly of a local character, and that being so we considered that we should not be justified in throwing on the county the maintenance of that street. I think that was the only street in dispute.

MR. ROWNTREE: That is a mistake.

*MR. RITCHIE: Well I think there was also a short length of street coming from the harbour. The House will understand what is the kind of traffic in that case when I say that one statement made in support of the contention that the street should be mained was that something like 55 tons of coal was carried from the harbour outside the borough during the year. We did not consider that was a sufficient reason for making it a main road. Then the hon. Member asked whether coloured plans of these roads could be distributed among Members of this House. I do not think it desirable that that course should be followed. There are very few roads in dispute, and I think, on the whole, we have given satisfaction to the boroughs in the decisions we have arrived at. I hardly think the House will desire that we should put the counties to the expense of providing coloured plans with regard to matters which are not of more than local interest.

*(1.0.) MR. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): Under other circumstances I might have asked permission to occupy a quarter of an hour of the time of the Committee, but at this late hour I will not ask for more than about five minutes. The Chancellor of the Exchequer intends to bring in a Bill to withdraw from circulation £30,000,000 to £40,000,000 of light gold, and replace

it, probably, in part by small notes. I have advocated that course ever since I have been in the House, and I have also pointed ont to the Chancellor of the Exchequer certain defects in the gold coinage. I hope the Government will take this opportunity of remedying those defects, which are that the metal we use is too soft, and that we make no charge for gold coinage. No effect was given to my recommendations. I, therefore, paid a visit to the Master of the Mint in Paris, who fully confirmed my view with regard to the softness of our metal. I saw at the French Mint a most ingenious machine for testing the wear of coins. I had a working model of it prepared, and should be very willing to submit it to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, or to any hon. Members who take an interest in the question. The result of the testing by the machine is that we lose by wear and tear nearly one sovereign in every 2,000 more than we should do if we used gold 9-10ths fine instead of 11-12ths. In the machine a coin passes over substances such as it meets with in actual circulation. Such experiments ought to be tried here. One extraordinary result arrived at in the experiment is that coins wear away according to their weight, and not according to their surface. Therefore, our idea with regard to half-sovereigns has been entirely upset. Our idea was that two half-sovereigns exposed to the same influences as a sovereign would wear away quicker, but it is absolutely proved by these experiments that half-sovereigns do not wear away any quicker because of their size. If they do wear rapidly, it shows that half-sovereigns are more used by the public, which would be an argument in favour of retaining them. I make these observations because the Chancellor of the Exchequer has stated that 10s. notes may be issued in order that half-sovereigns may be withdrawn. I would protest against so useful a coin being withdrawn from circulation. I think that to coin a large mass of silver without an international arrangement would be a very hazardous speculation. I strongly recommend Her Majesty's Government to investigate the question of the wear of gold, and to consider the question of free coinage, which enables people to melt down half-sovereigns all over the world and pomrote a drain upon gold in this country.

Question put, and agreed to.

ARMY ESTIMATES, 1891-2.

6. £100, Ordnance Factories.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

Committee to sit again to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

WAYS AND MEANS.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

1. Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the years ending on the 31st day of March, 1890 and 1891, the sum of £249,800 10s. 11d. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

2. Resolved, That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, the sum of £3,917,103 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

Committee to sit again upon Wednesday.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

POSSESSION OF GAME BILL.—(No. 226.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday, 17th June.

MOTION.

SCOTCH EDUCATION CODE, 1891.

(1.16.) MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I beg to move—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her that Article 133 of the Scotch Education Code, 1891, be amended by adding at the end thereof the words 'or who are under 14 years of age.'"

The limit age of the compulsory scale, as the House is aware, is 14, and after that age, whatever standard a boy may have reached, he cannot be compelled to attend school. As the Act at present stands, it exempts from the payment of fees all boys who have not yet passed the Fifth Standard. A boy may pass the Fifth Standard some time before he is 14. Looking at the Returns, it would appear that some boys pass the Fifth Standard at the ages of 10, 11, 12, or 13 As soon as a boy passes the Fifth Standard his parents have to pay fees, as the Act now stands, in respect of his continued attendance at school. It is thought by many that, in the case of the children of working men, it is quite sufficient that the parent should lose the wages which might be earned if his child were taken away from school, without having to bear the additional burden of the payment of fees merely because his child has passed the Fifth Standard. The practical effect of the existing provision of the Act must necessarily be somewhat to discourage the continued attendance at school of children who have made good progress with their books. I submit to the House that it is not necessary that there should be, so to speak, a sort of premium put upon backwardness—that it is not desirable to make the parent feel that if his child makes progress with his studies the result will be that he will have to pay fees from which he would have been exempt if the child had either been stupid or idle. I therefore propose that children shall be exempt from the payment of fees up to the age of 14, at whatever standard they may be. If an Amendment of this kind were carried, we should at last have reached a solid standing-ground in the matter of the payment of fees.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her that Article 133 be amended by adding at the end thereof the words 'or who are under 14 years of age.'"—(*Mr. Finlay.*)

*(1.22.) MR. HOZIER (Lanarkshire, S.): I do not suppose that for many a long year any measure has received so great a share of approval as the measure of the Government respecting free education in Scotland, and the best proof of that concurrence of approval is that on every platform in Scotland there is a sort of rivalry as to who deserves most credit for that measure. In my opinion, two names stand out prominently for special credit in connection with the measure. The name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who by his admirable management of finance enabled a large sum to be devoted to the purpose, for without the money we could have done nothing; and that of Mr. Craik, the Secretary of the Scotch Education Department, who evolved the scheme for carrying the proposals into practical effect, as without an equitable scheme the proposals would have been doomed to failure. Now, I cannot help feeling that those two benefactors would add considerably to the great benefits they have already conferred on Scotland if they could see their way to carrying into effect the proposal just made by my hon. Friend. At present education is free as far as it is compulsory. It is compulsory until Standard V. is passed or until a child reaches the age of 14. But a clever child passes Standard V. at the age of 11 or 12 or 13, and as a very valuable circular, issued by the Scotch Education Department, on the 27th of January, says—"The age shows a tendency to become lower year by year." The clever child, therefore, is only educated free up to the age of 11 or 12 or 13, while the duller child is educated free up to 14. The clever boy is thus handicapped, and it is proposed by the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Inverness to remove the handicap. As the circular of January 27th says—

"Complaints have of late frequently been made that children leave school as soon as they have passed the minimum standard required by law for exemption."

How is this difficulty to be met? Let me say at once that I will be no party to any further compulsion being put on the parents. The tendency to remove children from school is due to two causes. In the first place, the services of the children are needed at home, or the children are required as wage-earners for the family; and, in the second place, parents are naturally tempted to withdraw their children from school as soon as they are required to pay school fees. The circular of the 27th January proposes to establish a "merit certificate" to be obtained—

> "By an examination differing in kind, and not merely in degree, from that required for a bare pass in Standard V."

The prospect of this certificate will act as an inducement to the parents to keep their children at school, as it will have a current value throughout the whole of Scotland, and will become a passport to special employment. But there still remains the question of the payment of fees which acts as a temptation to parents to remove the children as soon as fees become exigible. I can well imagine that the Table on page 12 of the Return marked C.—6281 may be quoted to show that the children on whose behalf we speak are few in number: for it appears that 88·05 per cent. of the scholars in the public schools pay no fees, and no doubt a considerable proportion of those who do pay fees according to this Table pay fees in special fee-paying schools, which we do not propose to touch. Therefore, the proportion of those who at present pay fees in the regular schools is small. Even if we grant that, I do not think that in a matter of this importance we ought to be met with the axiom, "*De minimis non curat lex.*" But, as a matter of fact, I think that we have a right to consider that those very figures afford a strong argument in favour of our contention, for we may fairly maintain that there would be an infinitely larger proportion of children paying fees in the higher standards if it were not for the tendency to remove children as soon as fees are exacted. To sum up, let us put no further compulsion upon the parents, but let us offer them every inducement to keep their children at school. I beg to second the Motion.

*(1.29.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I have listened to the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite, and to my hon. Friend behind me, with great interest and with considerable sympathy with the object they have in view. But I wish to point out that the Government have undertaken to make proposals with regard to education as affecting England, Scotland, and Wales in the course of the present Session, and that, therefore, it would be extremely inconvenient to affirm a portion of the programme before we are able to lay the whole of our plans before the House. If this Motion were carried, a very considerable burden would be imposed on the rates, because the amount assigned, so far as the Government contribution is concerned, is strictly limited. I hope that the proposal that the Government will have to make will entirely satisfy hon. Members on both sides of the House, and therefore I would ask my hon. and learned Friend to postpone this Motion. I will for this purpose move the adjournment of the Debate; and I will undertake that if the proposal we shall have to make with regard to education should not satisfy the hon. and learned Member and his friends, then we will give him an opportunity of resuming Debate on his Motion.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

(1.30.) MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I do not wish to offer any opposition to the Motion for adjournment. I only wish to say that the proposition as put forward by the Mover and Seconder of the Resolution, does not meet the requirements of the case. It is not enough that clever boys should be educated free in the higher standards, the proper course is to free all the standards.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till Monday, 13th April.

It being after One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at half after One o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 17th March, 1891.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) BILL. [H.L.]—(No. 17.)

Reported from the Standing Committee without further amendment: The Report of the amendment made in Committee of the Whole House to be received on Thursday next.

CLERGY DISCIPLINE (IMMORALITY) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 59.)

Reported from the Standing Committee with further amendments: The Report of the amendments made in Committee of the Whole House and by the Standing Committee to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 68.)

POLLEN FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL. (No. 51.)

Reported from the Standing Committee, with amendments: The Report thereof to be received on Thursday next; and Bill to be printed as amended. (No. 69.)

SALE OF GOODS BILL [H.L.]—(No. 48.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

Lord HERSCHELL: My Lords, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill, which has for its object to bring into a single Code the law relating to the sale of goods, I do not intend to detain your Lordships with any observations upon the subject of codification generally. I think that whilst at one time there was a disposition, perhaps, to exaggerate the effect and advantage of bringing the law on any particular subject into a Code, and to suggest that if you could only codify the law the necessity for lawyers and litigation would be at an end; on the other hand, there was, perhaps, a disposition to depreciate the advantage of codification, which I think are very real. There can be no doubt that if the law can be put into such a shape that by reference to a single Act of Parliament containing, perhaps, not a great many sections, you may ascertain what the law is on particular points, where otherwise you would have to consult the text books and verify all the authorities cited. Great advantages are likely to result, and it would be likely to diminish the amount of litigation. But the experience which has been derived from the passing of the Bills of Exchange Act, which codified the law relating to mercantile instruments, has shown that there is another and unexpected advantage to be derived from codification. It may be that your Lordships know that the Bills of Exchange Act which was passed in 1882 in this country was adopted by the Colony of New Zealand in 1883, by the Colony of Victoria in the same year, by the Colonies of South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania in the following year, by New South Wales in 1887, and by the Dominion of Canada in 1890; and thus the consequence has been that upon an important branch of Mercantile Law—and it is one of very pressing importance—we have obtained now a uniform law in the Mother Country and in the greater proportion of self-governing colonies. I think your Lordships will feel that is an advantage derived from codification of no small importance; and that if we could have a similar Mercantile Law for all parts of Her Majesty's dominions where English laws prevail, and where there is not some special system, it would undoubtedly be very much for the benefit of commerce. In this connection I would venture to suggest whether some communication might not be made to the Crown Colonies, where the adoption of this Code would be appropriate — I mean those not having a special system, to which it would be inapplicable—with the view of seeing whether in those colonies the Code could not be adopted in the same way as it has been in the whole of the Australasian Colonies and in Canada. Obviously there would be an advantage in extending the area of such a system as that. The present Code which I have to submit to your Lordships deals with the law of the sale of goods, a branch of the Commercial Law, which is of great importance and interest. I do not intend to trouble your Lordships for a moment upon the general details of the Bill. I will only say that the Bill was drawn by Judge Chalmers, of the Birmingham County Court, the draftsman of the Bills of Exchange Act, which will afford your Lordships a guarantee of its being a faithful representation of the law on the subject. It was considered after the first draft was prepared by my noble and learned Friend Lord Bramwell, who made various suggestions upon it. With the like assistance I went with the draftsman carefully through all its provisions, and, therefore, I am in a position to make myself responsible for the Bill. I do not suppose, of course, that it is without some imperfections; probably it would be impossible for anybody to produce any Code of which that could be said; but I can say that it has been made as perfect as was possible, and in recommending it for Second Reading I can assure your Lordships it has received no small amount of pains and care.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—(*The Lord Herschell.*)

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Lord KNUTSFORD): I understand the noble and learned Lord to suggest that when the Bill is passed and has become law I should recommend it for the consideration of the Crown Colonies.

LORD HERSCHELL: Seeing that the Bills of Exchange Act has been adopted by the Australian Colonies and by the Dominion of Canada, I suggested whether some communication might not be made with Crown Colonies where the adoption of this Code would be appropriate—where, of course, a different system of law does not prevail.

*LORD KNUTSFORD: Certainly; I will take immediate steps to that effect.

*LORD BRAMWELL: I entirely agree with everything the noble and learned Lord has said about this Bill in particular and about codification in general; but I should like to ask him what he proposes should be done with this Bill if your Lordships read it, as doubtless you will, a second time; whether he proposes that it should go before your Lordships in Grand Committee? I cannot help thinking that, however carefully the Bill may have been drawn, and it certainly, in my judgment, is uncommonly well drawn, it is exceedingly desirable that it should go before a Select Committee to be considered, as in the case of the Partnership Bill.

LORD HERSCHELL: I quite agree. It certainly was my intention, when it went in the ordinary course to Committee, to move that it should be at once referred to a Sub-Committee of the Standing Committee.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª (according to order), and committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 60.)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading, read.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 3ª."—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

LORD BRABOURNE: I have too much respect for your Lordships' House and for myself to waste time in further delaying the Motion for the Third Reading of this Bill, which I have all along regarded, and still regard, as a foolish, unnecessary, and mischievous measure; but I must enter a last protest against it. It has been defended on the ground that it will diminish friction; but I do not think that the Government are aware of the amount of friction that will be caused in many parts of the country, especially in the Western and Southern Counties, by this measure which they have introduced. I think, probably, it will be found that about the time of the next General Election the friction will have come to a head. By that time the agriculturists will have discovered what this Bill means, and I wish the Government, then, joy of the result. I only wish to point out to-night the maximum of injustice that is going to be done by it. You are not content with interfering with all the arrangements that have gone on perfectly satisfactorily for a great number of years; you are not content with telling the poorer occupiers throughout the counties of England that they are henceforth to break their contracts with the landowners, but you are going to invite them to do so just in the middle of the period which would be covered by their contracts. You will not even give sufficient time for new contracts to be made to carry out your own views. I have never known a Bill that was so little called for, so little supported by Petitions, or so little considered by a large proportion of those who have to bear the burden of these charges. It is a measure with which the Government have proceeded simply and solely without considering them. My Lords, I will say no more, but leave the Bill with that parting benediction.

On Question, agreed to.

Verbal Amendments made.

Amendment moved, in line 19, leave out ("owner of the rent-charge") and insert ("person entitled to the sum ordered to be recovered.")—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

*LORD BRAMWELL: Perhaps the noble Marquess will allow me to call his attention to his third Amendment. I think the expression proposed to be substituted for the words in the clause is a very awkward one. The words which I refer to are "the sum ordered to be recovered." I would suggest to the noble Marquess it should be "ordered to be paid."

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I have no objection.

*LORD BRAMWELL: I think the clause would then be better English. That is my only reason for suggesting it.

LORD HERSCHELL: I do not think that will do, because it is not the fact; it is not "ordered to be paid" under this scheme. The Courts do not order it to be paid. They only order it to be recovered in a particular way.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: From a literary point of view, I think the language of all Acts of Parliament is a matter of despair; but I am in the hands of the noble and learned Law Lords as to what those words are likely to be held to mean when they are considered in a Court of Law. If they can agree upon the subject I am very willing to be guided by them.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE: For my own part, I must confess I take the same view as my noble and learned Friend Lord Herschell, that in order to be consistent with the language of the principal Act, which certainly is peculiar language, the words should stand as the noble Marquess has put them on the Paper. In the 1st sub-section the words are that "the Court may order that such sum may be recovered," and these are the very words.

*LORD BRAMWELL: May I call attention to Sub-section 2, which provides "the like powers of distraint for the recovery of the sum ordered to be paid?" If there is no order to pay, that section is wrong; if there is an order to pay, I think it is better the language should be consistent.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I am afraid my humble lay mind would rather agree with the noble and learned Lord who has just sat down, but I think I must leave the clause as it is.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I think here the draftsman has intended to cover both processes of recovery, and I am not certain if you strike out "to be recovered" and put in "to be paid," you may not get into some difficulty.

THE MARQUESS of SALISBURY: The difficulty is that in the previous section there are the words "the sum ordered to be paid." As it is hopeless to reconcile them, I beg to move the insertion of the words.

*LORD BRAMWELL: I do not press my objection if the noble Marquess does not desire to adopt it.

Amendment agreed to.

Verbal Amendments made.

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: There are some words on page 3, line 20, relating to service, that the County Court may direct what service is to be good service for the purpose of this Act "on the owner of any lands or tithe rent-charge." In the preceding sub-section and in Clause 4 we have also service "on the occupier" mentioned. Here it should be—

> "Shall be good service under this Act on the owner or occupier of any land, or on the owner of the tithe rent-charge."

I therefore, move to insert after "on the owner" the words "or occupier."

THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I think there can be no objection to this. Although, beyond all doubt, it is for the purpose of service on the owner that the rule is extended, still the words can do no harm.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I have no objection under those circumstances, though I do not quite know what service you have to make upon the occupier.

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: In the preceding sub-section it is provided that there shall be service upon the occupier in addition to the owner in certain cases.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I think it is quite right.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I think there can be no harm in it. I imagine the owner must be a person who can be found, and you can as well find him as the occupier.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7.

*LORD BRAMWELL: At line 21, page 5, I have an Amendment to leave out the words "or equity," which are needless. There are no suits in equity now. The word "law" is quite enough, and, therefore, these words had better be out.

LORD HERSCHELL: I had put down this same Amendment for the Standing Committee, but I abandoned it for this reason: Though I quite agree with my noble and learned Friend, I am told this is copied exactly from the clause in the County Courts Act. It is quite true that in one sense, no doubt, it may be said because a mistake was made there, that is no reason for repeating it here; but the words having been used there, and this being a question of appealing from the County Court, it might give rise to some question if you omit the words here.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I am afraid if the noble and learned Lord strikes out words simply because they are useless, he will establish a very bad precedent. There is usually a wealth of language in Acts of Parliament, which seems surprising to the ordinary lay mind.

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: The object of it, it strikes me, is this: The County Courts are Courts of Law, and they have a jurisdiction peculiar to themselves. The framers of the County Courts Act had that in view in using those two words, and, therefore, there might be some difficulty caused if they were struck out here.

Amendment negatived.

The Marquess of Salisbury

LORD HERSCHELL: On page 6, line 2, with reference to what I called attention to when the Bill was before the House at the last stage, I propose to insert the words "liability of the tithe rent-charge owner;" because it is quite possible that he may have appealed against his rating, and his rating might have been reduced on account of his liability to such remission as is mentioned. That is the way in which the question would ordinarily arise, though it could not be urged strictly if the remission had been taken into consideration.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I am bound to say this has alarmed some of the authorities very much. My mind is not quite subtle enough to see the absolute necessity for it; but I certainly cannot see the danger of it in any respect. I will admit it for the present, without, however, desiring at all to be understood as giving a guarantee that I shall be able to bind myself to it.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I think the words as they stand will come to the same thing. It is impossible that the remission as an actual fact can have been taken into account, and, therefore, the "remission" there means remission to an equivalent amount.

LORD HERSCHELL: Then I may perhaps propose it in a slightly different form which may get rid of the objection, and make it perfectly clear, if the Court is satisfied that neither the remission nor the amount of liability have been taken into account. I think that would include all the points.

Moved, to insert after "that," the words "neither the remission," and after "liability thereto" to leave out the word "not."—(*Lord Herschell.*)

On Question, agreed to

*LORD BRAMWELL: I think the Amendment I am now going to move is perfectly accurate and free from any objection. It is on page 6. The 5th sub-section says that "any clerk of the Commissioners of Taxes shall, &c." That is really a most original proposition. It is not right to impose a duty upon clerks of a Public Body, and, therefore, my proposal is to leave out the words "any clerk to," leaving it to the Commissioners, and they will appoint the way in which it is to be done.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I certainly will not oppose that.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 13.

THE EARL OF SELBORNE: I do not know whether the noble Marquess has anything to suggest with regard to the form of Clause 13; but I wish to make a suggestion upon it which I may tell your Lordships I have reason to know the noble Marquess will not object to. It is in the Reference to the Act, that the short title should be the "Tithe Rent-Charge Act, 1891," and not as in line 28, page 6, "Tithe Rent Act." The proper term is tithe rent-charge, as tithes have ceased to exist as tithes since 1836, and I think the noble Marquess shares my feeling for calling things by their proper names.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I share it when the names are not too long; but I think in this case it is a very reasonable insertion to make.

Amendment agreed to.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Now, my Lords, I have to move the addition of a new clause, which, I am afraid, is subject to what my noble Friend Lord Brabourne said was his benediction—the parting benediction he bestowed upon the Bill. I have only inserted it because I thought it more convenient that the Bill should come into operation at once, and I have had no information of a different kind. But it is quite obvious that the Bill cannot come into operation on the 31st March unless it has been passed by that time, which would not be the case if by any accident the Bill is delayed in another place. If so, it is obviously necessary that those words would require alteration; but unless they are inserted now in the Bill, it would not be competent to the House of Commons afterwards to alter it, and it is absolutely necessary to put in some date or another.

Amendment moved, to add the following new Clause after Clause 13—

"This Act shall come into operation on the thirty-first of March, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-one."—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

LORD BRABOURNE: It seems to me rather an unnecessary thing to add to this mischievous Bill. It is bad enough to say that you will allow people to break their contracts in future, but why they should be allowed also to do so in the middle of the annual contract period I cannot understand. It seems to me an unnecessary addition to its injustice, and I think it would be much better to postpone the date until the end of the time for paying the charge, which is in October, and allow the start to be made then. But, I suppose, it will be quite unavailing to make that or any other suggestion in face of the unholy alliance between the two Front Benches in this House; and as it has only occurred in this House, it is an alliance which astounds me. In another place the Bill was the subject of considerable opposition on the part of a mournful array of 162 men—Tories and Unionists—who devoted themselves to fighting against it; but when the Bill comes to this House we find all as sweet as sugar, the two Front Benches vieing with each other in paying mutual compliments. I can only say, after the observations which the noble Marquess has made with regard to the date of the Bill, that we poor agriculturists who are going to have this unnecessary measure forced upon us are still able to say, "Thank heaven we have a House of Commons!"

LORD HERSCHELL: I must entirely repudiate having been, in the noble Lord's phraseology—I do not know whether I should say, guilty of paying compliments to the noble Marquess, and I am not aware that from the Front Bench on which the noble Marquess sits, complaints have been addressed to this side of the House. Those are, I think, altogether creatures of the imagination of the noble Lord. But for myself, if I may be allowed to explain the position I have taken up with regard to the Bill, it is this: so far as it is designed to relieve the occupier of this payment, and to cast the burden which has always fallen ultimately on the owner, it may be directly, and in the first instance, on him entirely, I approve of the object of the Bill; and I do not know that the Party to which the noble Lord has alluded, to which I belong, has ever objected to the Bill so far as it embodies that principle. Some may have thought it does not go far enough, or that this, that, or the other provision ought to have been contained in it; but in so far as it carries out that principle, I cannot acknowledge for a moment that I have been guilty of the slightest inconsistency as a Member of the Liberal Party in desiring to see a Bill having that as its main object passed into law. As to the provisions contained in it, as far as they are consistent with that object and carry it out, I have done my best undoubtedly, as far as was in my power, to make the Bill which I believe to be a sound one, as good a working Bill as I can. I am not conscious of having done anything in that respect inconsistent with the full performance of the duties of a Member of the Party to which I belong, about which the noble Lord opposite seems so anxious. It is very evident that he feels it is a serious matter that there should be a falling away of any Liberal Lord from the principles which he has avowed, but, at the same time, I must confess I am not conscious of having laid myself open to such a charge. If we had been desirous of making this Bill, in any respect from our point of view, stronger or more extensive, or more practical, we are perfectly aware that we should have been wholly and entirely powerless in the matter. All that we could do, and all that both my noble Friends on this Bench, and others have endeavoured to do is this: that approving of the principle of the Bill to which I have alluded, we have endeavoured to so assist in framing the measure that it shall, containing that principle, be most effectually carried into law.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I only wish to say that I am not aware that in bringing forward this Bill, either in regard to the form of it or in conducting it through the various stages, there has been either on this side of the Table or the other any abandonment of the principles ordinarily followed in conducting public affairs. Certainly in this House it has always been the maxim of those who are the Opposition at the time undoubtedly to give effect to their principles, and, undoubtedly, to insist that those principles shall receive a fair hearing; but, at the same time, to do their best as Members of the Legislature in order to ensure that whatever Statute is put upon the Statute Book shall be as workmanlike an enactment as possible, and shall be so constructed as to be beneficial to the people. I also beg to say that the noble Lords opposite, who have, I think, never paid me any compliment at all, have not usually failed as regards avoidance of compliments which we on this side observed when in Opposition in trying to follow that very elementary rule. I do not think that this Bill is, or need be, a Party question; its first object is to relieve the tithe owner under circumstances of great trial, especially in one particular part of the country, but its more general, more prominent, and wider object is to give a true rendering in practice of the intention of the Act of 1836, to remove an abuse which has grown up insensibly and without being observed, and to place on the owner of the land that burden which Parliament intended he should bear, and which Parliament did not intend he should place upon the shoulders of the occupier.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill passed, and returned to the Commons; and to be printed as amended (No. 70.)

REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 53.)

House in Committee (according to order): Amendments made: and Bill re-committed to the Standing Committee.

REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN WRITS (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 61.)

House in Committee (according to order); Bill reported without Amendment: Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª on Thursday next.

SEED POTATOES SUPPLY (IRELAND) ACT, 1890, AMENDMENT BILL. (No. 58.)

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed.

EVIDENCE BILL [H.L.]—(No. 71.)

A Bill to consolidate certain enactments relating to evidence: And

TRUSTEE BILL [H.L.]—(No. 72.)

A Bill to consolidate enactments relating to trustees—Were presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1ª; and to be printed.

DOCK ACCOMMODATION AT GIBRALTAR.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*Viscount SIDMOUTH, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government whether, in the next Navy Estimates, a Vote will be proposed for the commencement of a Government dock at Gibraltar, said: My Lords, in a Paper which was recently published by the First Lord of the Admiralty an allusion was made to the subject of my question, and I, therefore, may conclude that it is not the intention of Her Majesty's Government to make any provision for the commencement of the dock at Gibraltar; but I trust the noble Lord who represents the Admiralty, who, for reasons which I think have so misled the Government, have departed from the Resolution which they have announced, not once, but three times, during the course of last Session, will be able to give your Lordships some assurance in the matter. I invite the noble Marquess at the head of the Government, as well as the noble Lord who represents the Department, to give his personal attention to this question, because if he will consult the opinion of the Naval Service in general he will find, as the House and the public, I am sure, will feel its importance and urgency. It is not a question which is to be put off, but is one to which attention is urgently demanded. At the commencement of last Session the noble Lord told me the Government were still hesitating, but in the month of April that they had made up their minds that the dock should be constructed. The noble Lord then laid before the House particulars showing exactly the manner in which it was to be made, and he announced improvements, which met with the general approbation of the naval profession. Finding that nothing was being done, in August, before Parliament was prorogued, I ventured once again to ask whether the Government intended to proceed with the dock. My noble Friend was not then in the country; but the answer I received from the noble Lord who spoke on behalf of the Government was that a Committee had been investigating the matter, and had decided that it was desirable the work should be commenced, but that their Report had not then been laid before the Admiralty. I presume that by this time, all parties being agreed as to the desirability of our having such a dock—a desirability which has been recognised over and over again by the Admiralty—there can be now no obstacle in the way, excepting that of expense, which can possibly delay the commencement of this dock. I will not attempt to weary the House by recapitulating all that may be said as to the importance of this matter. I can only say that I have over and over again referred to naval authorities—I do not urge my own opinion the least in the matter—but I have inquired very closely, and from all I have been able to ascertain from a large number of men in the Navy, and those who are most acquainted with the Naval Service, I have only found one officer who is opposed to it, and my late noble Friend Lord Carnarvon, I believe, stated that in his opinion it was undesirable. The reason why it was ever considered on the part of Lord Carnarvon, and perhaps one or two others, undesirable was that the harbour of Gibraltar is a bad anchorage. There is no question about that, but the improvements which my noble Friend announced will go a long way towards meeting that difficulty; and whether it be bad or good, there is no question that a dock can be constructed there. Without that dock your Lordships must remember that we have really, in this respect, got all our eggs, as far as the Mediterranean is concerned, in one basket. The only prospect of a large fleet manœuvring in the Mediterranean has, in the event of accidents in case of war, or receiving damage at the present time, is of being able to lay up in one of those very fine docks (there are four of them) which we have at Malta. But your Lordships will remember we have other countries to consider, and what they are doing. Although we are now, happily, on excellent terms with our neighbours, yet we do not know what circumstances may arise, and France at this moment has two excellent dockyards, one at Toulon, which is a first-rate harbour, and she has a naval establishment at Marseilles. Both of those places are capable of supplying the wants of a Navy, which is, be it remembered, only by one vessel inferior to our own upon that station. And another thing must be borne in mind. Although I do not know what the engagements of that country with ourselves were with regard to Tunis, there is no question whatever that France is establishing herself very firmly on the North African coast, and if, as Napoleon said, "Antwerp was a pistol-shot directed at the head of England," so in future we may come to regard the establishment of any foreign naval station at Tunis as a pistol-shot aimed at Malta. That is a very important matter. We have lost our former excellent positions. We were in possession at one time, I think for 70 years, of the best harbour in the Mediterranean, Port Mahon, but we foolishly surrendered that position, contrary to the advice of Lord St. Vincent. We subsequently surrendered Corfu, and now we are reduced entirely, as far as regards the safety we may say of our vessels in time of war and the safety of our naval equipment, to that one place which I have mentioned—Malta—with its four docks. As your Lordships know, we have another establishment; but one which I think Her Majesty's present Government, no more than any other Government which may succeed them, will ever succeed in improving, that is Cyprus. We certainly have Cyprus. But there is really only one other alternative, which I shall be happy to communicate at some other time to the noble Marquess on that station besides Gibraltar. I do hope the Government will give their attention to this matter. I can assure the noble Marquess and the Government that it is one which is looked upon by the Navy as absolutely essential to the safety of our Naval Forces in the Mediterranean in the event of war; and I am surprised to find that the matter has been deferred so long, the necessity for it having been so often admitted, and merely, as I fear, upon the question of a paltry expense of £400,000. Your Lordships will recollect that although difficulties may arise and events may take place within the space of a few months, or even weeks, yet the construction of a dock at Gibraltar is a matter the necessity of which having once been admitted cannot possibly with any safety be deferred. It will take at least four years before your dock can be in working order; and, therefore, that being the case, I would venture most respectfully to urge upon Her Majesty's Government the necessity of at once proceeding with this work, and I also hope the noble Lord will be able to give some very good reason why it has been so long postponed.

LORD ELPHINSTONE: My Lords, knowing the very great interest which my noble Friend takes in this matter, I am not the least surprised at his repeating the question which he has put to me on three or four former occasions. As I told him last time, there had been some opposition to the scheme proposed, and a Committee had been appointed to inquire into our position at Gibraltar in reference to the matter. That Committee was appointed in April last, and Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett was Chairman of it. They examined a large number of witnesses, naval, military, and civilians, and reported in September last. They were opposed to the idea of the dock being constructed and managed by a private company as had been suggested, and recommended that it should be built with Imperial funds, and wholly and solely managed by the naval authorities. They also recommended that the New Mole should be prolonged, and that another Mole should be made for commercial purposes. The Report was only received in September last, as I have said, and the estimated cost of the work was so large, and so many Departments and interests had to be considered and consulted in the matter, that no action has yet been taken by the Admiralty. No Vote, therefore, was proposed in the Navy Estimates for this year, there being so many more pressing, and, as the Admiralty think, more important matters to be considered. As regards next year, we cannot at present forecast what provision should be made for a dock at Gibraltar.

House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past Six o'clock, to Thursday next, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 17th March, 1891.

The House met at Two of the clock.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT RAILWAY BILL—(*by Order.*)

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read the third time."

*(2.7.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I am sorry that I am again compelled to trouble the House in regard to this Bill, but it is a matter of very considerable importance, and I have placed on the Paper an Amendment which I beg to move:—

> "That the Order for Third Reading be read, and discharged, and that the Bill be re-committed to the former Committee.—That it be an Instruction to the Committee to insert Amendments in the Bill providing that the triangular piece of land west of Gloucester Road Station be used only for railway purposes, or for the erection of buildings of a substantial and permanent character."

The piece of land which is proposed to be taken for the purposes of this railway, is at the present moment a sort of "no mans' land," consisting of about two acres lying on the west of the Gloucester Road Station. It is surrounded by a number of good houses the proprietors of which object to its being converted into the sort of Cremorne which appears to be contemplated by the promoters of the Bill. I proposed an Amendment on the Second Reading of the Bill, but was unsuccessful. I must acknowledge that the Committee, to a certain extent, have modified the provisions of the measure, but I need scarcely point out how prejudicial and unpleasant it will be to the residents to have a resuscitation of such performances as those which were the principle features of the Cremorne Gardens, immediately behind their premises. I will not go into the question of whether Cremornes are necessary not, but what I do assert is that it is not the business of a Railway Company to get land by compulsory powers for railway purposes, and then convert it into an exhibition. Similar exhibitions, such as the Fisheries and others, have quite ruined parts of South Kensington for residential purposes, and I think that a Railway Company which has obtained land for railway purposes ought not to be allowed to convert it by Act of Parliament into something else. I am quite certain that if the company came here with an original Bill for this object they would be defeated, and therefore I do not see why they should be allowed to do it under the provisions of an omnibus Bill. For these reasons I hope the House will agree to the Instruction I have moved.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "now read the third time," in order to add the words "re-committed to the former Committee."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'now read the third time' stand part of the Question."

(2.10.) MR. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): The hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) raised this question on the Second Reading, and it was again raised in Committee, but on neither stage was the hon. Member able to make out a case. The hon. Member says that the company, having acquired land for one purpose, ought not to be allowed to devote it to another; but this Bill will not give the company the power which the hon. Member imagines it does. The Bill leaves the question regarding the land exactly as it stood before, and the rights of the parties will remain the same. All that the Bill does is to leave to the company the rights they had before, and it would be altogether outside our Parliamentary practice to tack on to the Bill a provision which in effect amounts to an attempt to place a legal construction upon an agreement.

(2.13.) SIR J. DORINGTON (Gloucester, Tewkesbury): As the Chairman of the Committee that dealt with the Bill I wish to say that the whole question raised by the Amendment of the hon. Member opposite was carefully considered, and it appeared that there was a misapprehension. There were two plots of land to which the word "exhibition" might apply; but the

Committee inserted in the Bill a clause to provide that nothing in the measure shall apply to those pieces of land. We did not consider it right to impose on the company restrictions in regard to land which is undoubtedly their own, or to impose upon them fresh restrictions. I trust that the House will support the decision of the Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY BILL.—(*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(2.16.) MR. WHITLEY (Liverpool, Everton): Some objections have been raised to the Second Reading of this Bill by hon. Members opposite, and they are all directed to a clause which enables the company to build a hotel. On behalf of the company I am authorised to say that as there is a general objection to the clause, if the Bill goes to a Committee, the clause will be withdrawn. Under these circumstances I hope that the opposition to the Second Reading will not be pressed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed.

MANCHESTER, SHEFFIELD, AND LINCOLNSHIRE RAILWAY (EXTENSION TO LONDON, &c.) BILL—(*by Order.*)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(2.20.) MR. JAMES (Gateshead): I beg to move as an Amendment—

> "That, having regard to the extreme importance of open spaces in crowded cities, this House is not prepared to entertain a measure which involves interference with a considerable area of open space in London."

I am quite aware that this Bill is perhaps the most important Bill that has been introduced this Session, and I am prepared to admit that on general grounds it is not only wise but usual to allow such measures to pass a Second Reading so that the issues they involve may be considered by a Committee upstairs. The Amendment of which I have given notice affects however the question of open spaces in large cities, and I respectfully maintain that that is not a question with which counsel and Committees are as competent to deal as this House. It has been the usual custom when a projected line of railway approaches a large city to drive the railway through common land. In doing this the company pursued a worldly course, because the interests connected with common land were not likely to be defended by anybody, and a Railway Company were thus able to acquire large tracts of land without paying for it. This practice fortunately attracted the notice of the late Mr. Fawcett, and in connection with other Members who felt an interest in the subject, the Commons Preservation Society was formed and established. The result has been that the interests of the public have been carefully guarded, and a protest effectually raised against unnecessary aggression and invasion on the part of Railway Companies. There is, of course, some difference of opinion as to what an open space is—some people say that this House is an open space, while others look upon Westminster Hall and the Charing Cross Railway Station in the same light; there is a great deal of difference of opinion as to what may be involved in the definition of an open space, but I make this Motion in no sense in antagonism to this Railway Company, or to railways in general. Railways, however, are not everything, and it is not desirable that every other interest should be sacrificed in favour of a huge commercial speculation on behalf of those who desire to travel. No doubt it will be of advantage to Yorkshire and Lancashire to see this railway carried into London, and the hon. Members for Leicester (Mr. A. W. McArthur), and Sheffield (Mr. Mundella), will feel that it will benefit their constituents. From their point of view my proposition is a monstrous one; but I can assure the House that I would not propose it if I did not think that my case is a very strong one, and if I had not come to the conclusion that this Railway Company has no right to invade this open space. The open space chiefly affected by this Bill is the neighbourhood of Lord's Cricket Ground and St. John's Wood. Some of my friends say that I am opposing the Bill mainly in the aristocratic interests of Lord's. Now I am not the Member for Lord's, and I believe that their interests will be represented by my right hon. Friend the Member for Bury (Sir H. James). A great many of the public derive pleasure from University and public school matches at Lord's. But I know what has been attempted in the past to be done with open spaces. Not many years ago—some seven or eight—we were astonished when we came back to London to find set up in Parliament Square something like a sentry box which was to form one of the ventilators of the Underground Railway. So indignant was the House in regard to that proceeding that almost without precedent the decision of the Select Committee was upset and the erection was removed. I think we should have the same objection to see anything done that would interfere with the use of Lord's Cricket Ground, and the public school and other matches which draw so many people together for harmless amusement and recreation. But quite apart from Lord's, there is the general question in regard to St. John's Wood, which comprises the large area known as the Clergy Orphans' School, the Zoological Gardens, and the disused burial ground of St. John's parish. I have been furnished with the following carefully prepared statement, which embodies all the material facts in relation to the history and character of the neighbourhood—

> "The suburb of St. John's Wood is on a slope which was formerly the property of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John. Some 350 acres known as the St. John's Wood Estate have now been for some considerable time owned by the Eyre family, by whom this large extent of land has been leased out in plots for the erection of residences. This Estate, which adjoins the western extremity of Regent's Park and reaches to South Hampstead, has an entirely exceptional character among the residential suburbs of London. The ground landlord under whom the suburb was laid out had ideas beyond the mere question of rent-roll, and exacted the construction of high-class villas, detached and semi-detached, with ample gardens and forecourts, allowing only such terraces of shops as would suffice for the service of the neighbourhood. This ideal of an open neighbourhood has been rigorously enforced up to the present day; and owners of leases who have from time to time desired to enlarge their houses have been met by the consistent objection that their proposed operation would militate against the open character of the neighbourhood, which the ground landlord meant to maintain, regardless of the heritage of bricks and mortar which he might secure to his successor by allowing the openings to be blocked. This is the main reason why the air of St. John's Wood is so much purer than that of other residential suburbs. The northerly winds sweep over Hampstead Heath, pass across St. John's Wood gardens and between the well-separated blocks of buildings, and reach Marylebone comparatively uncontaminated, and the air, passing over Regent's Park, reaches the thickly-built neighbourhood of Paddington in a far purer state than it would if Walpole Eyre had let the jerry-builder do his will with the estate of the old Knights Hospitallers. The open character of St John's Wood may be well exemplified by the remark that of the 35 acres which Sir Edward Watkin proposes to take for his terminus station, only about five are actually built upon, while 30 are made up of gardens, forecourts, and roadways. Besides this general freedom from close streets of lofty brickwork, St. John's Wood possesses two considerable open spaces a stone's throw north of Regent's Canal—to wit, Lord's Cricket Ground and the charming garden dotted with fine forest trees, laid out in the disused burial ground attached to St. John's Wood Chapel. The open suburb which Sir E. Watkin proposes to invade could not in the natural course of things be deprived of its valuable sanitary character for from 29 to 46 years, such being the time that the leases have still to run."

In the circumstances thus sketched, the necessity for the proposed new railway ought to be completely demonstrated before the neighbourhood is invaded and taken possession of. Of course, the Bill has received the support of the provincial constituencies through which it passes. We all recognise that this Bill is the child of my hon. Friend the Member for Hythe (Sir E. Watkin). I have always regarded my hon. Friend as a great public benefactor, but I think he will himself admit that he has a great many irons in the fire. He is Chairman of the South Eastern Railway Company, of the Metropolitan Company, and of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Company; he is the owner of Snowdon; he is engaged in disinterring coal in Kent, and he is the parent of the Channel Tunnel Scheme, and of an Eiffel Tower in London. One is almost tempted to say—

> "He doth bestride the narrow world
> "Like a Colossus."

He is interested in so many large and vast undertakings that I think we should have further time for consideration before he is permitted to destroy Lord's and St. John's Wood. No doubt he has done a great deal of good, but sometimes in doing good it is possible at the same time to do a great amount of harm. It is because I am of opinion that this Bill is calculated to injure interests which are distinctly of a public character that I move this Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "having regard to the extreme importance of open spaces in crowded cities, this House is not prepared to entertain a measure which involves interference with a considerable area of open space in London."—(*Mr. Walter James.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(2.35.) SIR E. WATKIN (Hythe): Perhaps I may be allowed to say that there was never any proposal to erect a station with steam and smoke in Parliament Square. The then Minister of Public Works proposed an extension from Paddington to Government land about Delahay Street. That was the project of the right hon. Gentleman.

(3.36.) MR. BOULNOIS (Marylebone, E.): I am quite aware that it is unusual to oppose a Bill of this nature on the Second Reading, and that the Chairman of Committees is most averse to any attempt to throw out a Private Bill upon this stage. But I think that the hon. Member for Gateshead (Mr. James) has said quite sufficient to justify the House in taking the Bill into consideration; and I think I shall be able to show that there are exceptional circumstances which render it necessary in regard to this measure that the House should pronounce an opinion. There are three grounds on which I oppose the Bill; and the first is that there are a great number of persons who are injuriously and seriously affected by the provisions of the measure who are unable to be heard anywhere except through their Representatives in this House. The Bill affects a considerable number of persons whose property lies outside the lines of deviation, and although they may present Petitions they cannot be heard if the Bill goes into Committee. In such cases no compensation is given, and the only opportunity they have of presenting the hardships and grievances they may sustain is through their Representatives in this House itself. Nor can the Representatives of the Crown be heard if the Bill is allowed to go into Committee. My second ground for opposing the Bill is that the scheme proposed by this Railway Company is absolutely unprecedented. I know of no instance in which a railway has entered London by intersecting large and valuable residential property. The third ground for asking the House to interpose is the question which has already been raised by the hon. Member for Gateshead that a large area of open space—one most vital and necessary to the whole of the Metropolis will be taken away by this scheme. I do not know whether it is necessary that I should describe to the House the locality of St. John's Wood.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Yes, do. [*Laughter.*]

MR. BOULNOIS: I could never understand why, when mention is made of St. John's Wood, there should be a laugh. I can only say that the residents of St. John's Wood do not look on this as a laughing matter. Probably the locality is little known to hon. Members who come from the country. They may drive as far as Lord's and occasionally go further, but they do not know anything of the unique character of the locality. Let me read a short description by a lady whose name I am sure will command respect—Miss Octavia Hill—who wrote a forcible letter to the *Times* of yesterday on this subject, and spoke of the neighbourhood as being singularly open and airy. She says:—

> "Here is a space, free for light and air to pass over to the more crowded districts, its wide streets bordered with gardens in which laburnum and hawthorn make the spring bright for all who walk from the Lisson Grove district to Regent's Park or Hampstead Heath, over which for all Marylebone the wind sweeps fresh and free."

I do not know whether it is necessary that I should enter further into a description of the locality, but the promoters of the Bill in a circular which they have issued, say that the ground proposed to be occupied as a terminus is ground either built upon, or, in the natural course of things, to be built upon. Now where it is proposed to have the terminus there are 30 acres of fine open space, and these will be covered by a railway depôt. Let me describe this railway. It enters St. John's Wood, or South Hampstead, at the Swiss Cottage, and is to pass by a tunnel or cutting until it reaches Lord's. From thence it is to run in an open cutting, 250 yards wide, into a huge terminus covering 35 acres. The Petition presented against the Bill contains some 1,400 signatures, but only 100 of the persons it represents can be heard in Committee. Among the persons who will be seriously injured by the proposal, are 85 or 86 well known artists including Mr. Alma Tadema, Mr. M'Whirter, Mr. Bruton Reviere, and Mr. Harry Furness. It is said they can go to other spots to follow their profession; but will their patrons follow them? Then it is said there is a railway already in St. John's Wood. So there is, but it is under cover, and only passengers are carried on it. The proposed line, however, is not only to carry passengers, but goods, coals, manure, fish, and every other abomination that can be named. Then it has been argued that the open spaces in the locality will not remain long, as the leases are short. That may be so as to some part of the neighbourhood, but in a greater number of instances there are independent freeholders on the estate, and it is extremely unlikely that they will make up their minds to convert their freeholds into leaseholds. But supposing all these spaces are built upon, it is perfectly clear that Regent's Park, Hampstead Heath, and Parliament Hill, will never be covered with houses. This proposed terminus is only 170 yards from Regent's Park. It is perfectly certain that Regent's Park will never be built upon, but can anyone deny that the smoke, dust, and steam, together with the smells which would come from the fish and manure trucks would seriously injure and pollute the salubriousness and healthiness of the park? Lord's Cricket Ground, I maintain, is almost as much a national open space as Regent's Park. The Cricket Ground is about the same distance from the terminus as the Park, and the promoters of the railway know, that unless they could arrange matters with the Marylebone Cricket Club, serious opposition would be offered to them. As a result, instead of there being a wide open cutting through Lord's, as shown in the deposited plans, four little tubes are to be pushed under the extreme eastern verge of Lord's, and for this concession the club are to receive a slice of the property which now belongs to the Clergy Orphan School. But does anyone imagine if the hon. Baronet (Sir E. Watkin) gets a foothold in Lord's, he will not eventually take the whole ground? If this railway is not a sham, if it is to have any traffic at all, the terminus must be a larger one than that which is now proposed, and to effect this Lord's must be acquired altogether. But what is to happen to cricket players even supposing the terminus remains as proposed? Fancy a match between Oxford and Cambridge, or Eton and Harrow, with the galaxy of beauty which is always to be found at Lord's on such occasions. If there is a south wind, dust and dirt will be blown from this terminus, and not only be a great inconvenience, but will damage the beautiful and costly dresses of the ladies. Artists, literary men, men of leisure, and those persons who naturally seek quiet and repose in this quiet neighbourhood are well aware that if it is for the public good, their comfort and convenience must give way, but they deny that there is any necessity for it. If there is any necessity for a new line of railway from the North, the company promoting it should be compelled to avail themselves of the district already occupied by rail ways where they would not be likely to inflict a real and lasting injury upon anyone.

*(3.0.) MR. BROADHURST (Nottingham, W.): I rise on behalf of the constituency I have the honour to represent to appeal to the House to give a Second Reading to this Bill. I am much surprised that my hon. Friend the Member for Gateshead should take the extreme course of trying to defeat the Bill on the Second Reading, and thereby deprive the promoters of the right of being heard in its favour. But my hon. Friend did not seem to throw his heart into the business of opposition; he rather spoke as a person who regretted he had undertaken the duty of opposing. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down pleaded somewhat pathetically for the interests of the people of St. John's Wood. No one desires seriously to

injure the people of that district, or of any other district, but, of all the districts in London, St. John's is the one most blessed with open spaces, both in front and rear. As a matter of fact, it is surrounded by great open spaces. I support the Bill on behalf of the people of Nottingham. Nottingham has a population of 250,000. It is teeming with manufactures; it is alive with industry; and yet it is not served by any one main system of railway. Both the Great Northern and the Midland are only connected with Nottingham by branch lines, and there is a very large area untouched. I make no complaint against the Great Northern or the Midland for their passenger service, but it is not within the power of these companies to serve Nottingham as it ought to be served, considering its commercial position and its industrial necessities. The new line which this Bill contemplates will be an enormous blessing to Nottingham, and would afford opportunities for trade and commerce which it has never yet enjoyed. We should have direct communication with the furthermost parts of Scotland and every district in the South and West of England. Surely then an important borough such as Nottingham is at least entitled to be heard before a Committee, and is not to be disposed of in this off-hand manner by refusing to read the Bill a second time. My Colleague the Member for East Nottingham (Mr. A. Morley) presented yesterday a Petition in favour of the Bill signed by 16,000 persons, and I also presented a Petition bearing an enormous number of signatures. Every section of the commercial community of Nottingham is united to a man in favour of the scheme, and one of the largest meetings of the working classes ever held in the borough was unanimous in supporting it. Surely these are reasons why we should agree to-day to the Second Reading of the measure. Leicester, with a population of 150,000, is also in its favour, and a united population of nearly 500,000 in Nottingham and Leicester deserve some consideration. I should be sorry to advocate any measure that would wilfully or carelessly destroy open spaces, but I think we ought to regard the pressing necessities of a great community. Whatever shortcomings there may be in the Bill may be amended in Committee, and by opening up increased facilities for communication we shall really be providing for increased trade and increased prosperity for the communities interested.

(3.10.) Mr. BARNES (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): In the County of Derby we are fully alive to the absolute necessity of this Bill. At present we have only one railway, notwithstanding the enormous increase of traffic, and my constituents are of opinion that with one railway their interests are not adequately served; especially so far as the coal traffic is concerned. What they require is a railway which shall enable them to get direct to London and carry their traffic south of London. I was somewhat astonished to hear the views of the hon. Member for Marylebone (Mr. Boulnois) as to the carrying of coal being an abomination. How are we to go on without coal? How is the industry of the country to be carried on without it? I certainly hope the House will allow the Bill to go before a Select Committee.

*(3.12.) Sir J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): If I were to register my vote according to my own personal interests, I should probably divide against the Second Reading of the Bill; but I wish respectfully to call the attention of the House to the position in which some of these railway questions stand at the present moment. They seem to take up much more of the time of the House than they used to do; and I cannot help thinking that the House of Commons, in trying to do the work of Committees, is not only in that way occupying time which might more usefully be employed for national purposes, but is also preventing railway measures from receiving in Committees that consideration which commercial interests require. I can recollect the time when the Second Reading of a Railway Bill, except under special circumstances, was never debated in the House itself, but was sent to a Committee in which it could be fully considered and threshed out. It is all very well to talk of Mr. Briton Riviere and Mr. Alma Tadema and other respectable people in the neighbourhood of St. John's Wood, but the real question is how the interests of the Metropolis at large will be affected. I am astonished

to hear hon. Members speak of the inconvenience of a railway when it is well known that the railways have been the great civilisers and convenience of mankind. The hon. Gentleman opposite spoke of the fish traffic. Of all the railways in London this is the one which would help us most in regard to the fish traffic. It would bring fish direct from Grimsby at a very materially reduced cost. I submit that all the points that have been raised in opposition should be dealt with in Committee, and I enter my *caveat* against the House going into these questions instead of leaving them to the Committee.

(3.20.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I agree that, as a general rule, it is better to relegate these questions to Committees; but for the last 15 years those interested in the preservation of open spaces have raised the question of Bills of this kind, because open spaces have not received good treatment at the hands of Committees. In the present case the question is not merely a question in regard to Nottingham. I am of opinion that there should be more communication between the Midlands and London; but the terminus should be well chosen, and that proposed has not been as well chosen as it might have been. I have put down an Instruction, in the event of the Second Reading being carried, empowering the Committee to consider whether some better site for a terminus could not be selected, and I understand that the promoters of the Bill are not unprepared to consent to that Instruction. On the strict understanding that the Committee will be able to consider the question of alternative termini, I will not object to the Second Reading.

(3.25.) MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I object to the Bill on account of its interference with Lord's Cricket Ground, which is the most unique space in London. I am told that the members of Lord's have agreed to it, but there has been no general meeting on the subject, and every cricketer and every member of Lord's that I have spoken to has objected to it very strongly. They do so because they are convinced that if there is a great terminus built on the other side of Lord's, the company will not be content with two tubes under the ground, but will presently want the greater part of the space. If the Committee agree to it, they may find themselves in a great minority at the next meeting. Lord's is not an aristocratic ground. If hon. Members will go there, not when the Oxford and Cambridge or Eton and Harrow match is being played, but on the date of any of the great county matches, they will be surprised to see many thousands of working men enjoying their holiday in a rational and orderly manner. For these and other reasons I venture to ask the House on this occasion to throw out the Bill, which I believe will be not only detrimental to the health of the neighbourhood, but to the well-being of the Metropolis.

(3.27.) SIR H. JAMES (Bury, Lancashire): It is evident from what has been said in this House and outside that a great interest exists in the preservation of Lord's, and the House will agree in sharing that view. When the Bill was first introduced it was felt that a most serious attack was being made upon the preservation of Lord's Cricket Ground. The committee of the Marylebone Cricket Club, of which I have the honour to be a member, and the acting chairman of which is Sir Spencer Ponsonby Fane, is composed of cricketers like Lord Lyttleton, Mr. Ridley, and Mr. Walker, who have a most practical knowledge of what is necessary for the preservation of a cricket ground, and who, as every cricketer in England knows, are most jealous of the interests of the Club. The committee at first decided to oppose the Bill, and to try to prevent the substantial injury they thought it would do the ground; but they were approached by the promoters, who expressed their wish in no way to interfere with the ground. The Railway Company offered the Marylebone Cricket Club certain terms for the preservation of Lord's Ground. I do not recognise that offer as the substituting of four tubes instead of making an open cutting. What has in effect been done is the withdrawal of the deposited plans; and the promoters, instead of taking a substantial part of the cricket ground, have agreed to confine their operations to tunnelling a narrow strip at the extreme end, which forms part of the practice ground. The land required for the tunnel will be 124 feet in breadth, and the work is to be carried on between the months of September and April, so as not to interfere with the practice, and all arrangements have been made for the ground being left in as good condition for practice as it is now. The ground which the company will take will be 4,300 square yards. What do they propose to give Lord's in return? The committee have been long attempting to acquire ground belonging to the Clergy Orphans' School, and the Railway company will have to take that ground. In consideration of the right to tunnel, they have offered to hand over to the committee of Lord's an area which will make the ground perfectly square instead of irregular as now, and this area consists of 8,600 square yards, or double the extent of ground taken. In addition, the Railway Company agree to give Lord's a lease for nothing of 4,000 square yards more land, making in all 12,600 square yards for the right to tunnel under 4,300. In that case what had the committee to do? How could they with propriety oppose the scheme, and say that it would interfere with an open space, when in reality it added to the open space. I do not believe the Railway Company in the future will make any more demands for land. That which they now seek will give them room for 10 working rails, and they say that is all they will require. But if they ask for more in days to come they will be met by this agreement as an answer to their demand. I admit that in considering this matter the Committee of the Marylebone Club have never discussed the likelihood of the terminus causing damage to ladies' dresses on the occasion of the Oxford and Cambridge matches, but it will be open to the hon. Member for Marylebone to urge that point before the general meeting of the Club which has been called to consider the action of the Committee.

(3.35.) MR. LABOUCHERE: The opposition to this Bill going into Committee in the ordinary course is not based on any opposition to the railway or to the proposal that there should be a new terminus in London, but is simply directed to the fact that it is proposed to have the terminus in St. John's Wood. The hon. Member opposite—the Member for St. John's Wood—who seconded the Amendment, based his opposition upon two grounds: first, that St. John's Wood consists of open spaces which it is necessary to preserve; and next, that it would destroy Lord's Cricket Ground. We have just heard from my right hon. Friend the Member for Bury (Sir H. James) that the committee of Lord's Cricket Ground have agreed to the arrangement proposed by the promoters of the Bill, and as to the open spaces the hon. Member says the land has been laid out for semi-detached villas, which he says are of great value to the Metropolis for the preservation of pure air. This is the first time I ever heard of the pure air of St. John's Wood permeating Regent's Park and the neighbourhood, nor have we the slightest guarantee that the present state of things will be always maintained; and that these separate villas will remain a permanent institution. The owners will look after their own interests, and as the population increases this locality will naturally be converted into terraces, roads, and so on. It is impossible for the hon. Member to guarantee that this will remain an open space even until the leases run out in 30 years. They are not open spaces in the general sense of the word, and I cannot understand how anybody connected with the preservation of open spaces should have taken the matter up. The hon. Member opposite says that some 85 artists live there, and that the whole 85 object to this scheme. Now, I should like to know how many of these artists paint pictures that are worth looking at. At the most not more than five of them, and they will go on painting even if there happens to be a railway near. In fact, the whole opposition to the Bill is absurd. I advocate the making of a terminus where it is most desirable in the interests of the community generally, despite the objection of people who live in detached villas—and a very remarkable people some of them are—and certain artists who have been alluded to by the hon. Member for Marylebone. I hope, under the circumstances, that the House will read the Bill a second time.

*(3.42.) BARON F. DE ROTHSCHILD (Bucks, Aylesbury): As one of the Representatives of the County of Buckingham I support the Bill. Buckingham is a long and narrow county, with two large railways in connection with it; but neither of them connects the county

either with the North or South of England. The passenger traffic is slow and inconvenient, with constant delays and stoppages, and the cost of goods traffic is exceptionally high. We have heard a good deal about the agricultural labourer, and only the other day we passed the Second Reading of a Bill to enable him to have small holdings; and I am convinced that no scheme could be of more advantage to the agricultural labourer in Bucks than to secure the advantage of direct railway communication. The population of the Metropolis is increasing enormously, and the more it increases the greater will be the demand for the agricultural produce of Buckinghamshire, and the greater will be the benefit conferred upon the people by the construction of a direct line of railway. Of course, when a new railway is proposed there is much opposition to it, but it seems to me that the House will consult the interests of the majority of the people by reading this Bill a second time and referring it to a Select Committee.

*(4.35.) MR. MURDOCH (Reading): This is the first time I have heard the terms of the arrangement between the promoters and the committee of Lord's Cricket Ground, but I feel certain that any committee of which the right hon. Member for Bury is a member will have done its best in the interests of Lord's. It is very likely, however, that the committee may not have had their attention called to what may take place in the future. I cannot help feeling that in the immediate future it will be found necessary to widen the approaches of this railway, and that can only be done in the westward, where Lord's Cricket Ground is situated. If it is found absolutely necessary to have better approaches, I am afraid that Parliament would not stand in the way, but would, in the interests of the travelling public, grant the increased accommodation required. Almost every railway in London—the London and South Western, the London and North Western, the Great Northern, and the Midland—have been compelled to widen their approaches. Those who approach the Bill in the interest of Lord's contend that there is no necessity for the railway taking this route at all. If it left the Metropolitan and St. John's Wood Railway more to the northward it would run well to the westward of Lord's, and there would be no necessity hereafter for encroaching upon the ground at Lord's. It might be more costly for the promoters, but that, I think, is not the question which this House ought to entertain. For my own part, I do not think that the promoters would be damnified by postponing the Bill for 12 months and coming next year to Parliament with an amended Bill. I am afraid that the right hon. Member for Bury and the committee of Lord's have confided too much in the promises of the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway Directors, and, for my own part, I think it is a case where the old adage holds true that "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." It will be far better for the members of the Marylebone Cricket Club to preserve the ground they have than to trust to the promises of the projectors of this line, which may never be fulfilled.

(3.50.) MR. MUNDELLA (Sheffield, Brightside): I hope the House will allow me to call attention to something more important than the interests of Lord's Cricket Ground, namely, the great industrial importance to the manufacturing districts and the working classes in the Midland Counties of a line of railway direct to London. When the Midland Railway proposed to come to London it was violently opposed by the Great Northern. It was urged that it would displace thousands of the working classes, and that there was no necessity for it at all. I should like to ask any Member of this House now what would be the condition of things in London if the Midland had not come here. All the great railway reforms which have taken place in London have been the result of the Midland coming here: we have secured more rapid and cheaper travelling, and the abolition of second-class carriages.

*MR. MURDOCH: The Midland came into London through a very poor district, and it was of advantage to sweep the property away.

MR. MUNDELLA: Yes; and the Midland encountered the most violent opposition on that account. It is only fair to the Midland Railway to say that they have been the pioneers in every kind of railway reform. If it had been running, as the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway is, over other lines it could not have accomplished these reforms, and it is only because it has its own terminus that it has been able to do so. The proposition which the promoters of the Bill have made to the committee of Lord's Cricket Ground is a most handsome one, and I would point to the fact that no Member representing a district interested in the scheme has risen to oppose the Bill. The hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Barnes) spoke of the congestion of the coal traffic, and the hon. Member for Aylesbury (Baron F. de Rothschild) called attention to the disadvantages to which the rural districts of Buckinghamshire are subjected owing to the want of direct railway communication. My hon. Friend the Member for Nottingham (Mr. Broadhurst) has spoken of the importance of the line to Nottingham; and, as I know every inch of the ground the line is intended to traverse, I can truly assert that there could be no more important railway for the development of the mining and trading interests it is intended to serve. Since the Midland came into London the constituency I have the honour to represent has doubled, and the traffic of the district has increased by more than 12,000,000 tons within the last 20 years. In 1870 the whole amount of coal raised in South Yorkshire and Derbyshire was between 10,000,000 and 11,000,000 tons, and it is now 22,000,000 tons. Nevertheless, there are complaints that the traffic is congested, and that it is impossible to have it conveyed with facility and without delay. The projected line will traverse an entirely new district—a district not touched either by the Midland or the Great Northern, and it is as important for agriculture as it is for manufactures. South of Leicester it will touch places which have no railway near them and with a sparse population, simply because the only means of communication is by carriers' carts. I may add that I am authorised to accept the modified Instruction of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre), and I hope the Instruction of the hon. Member for Gateshead will be withdrawn. I hope the hon. Member will withdraw his Amendment. ["No!"] Oh, then I must make some remarks on the case for St. John's Wood. Never was a weaker case presented to the House. It must be remembered that the leases of the 30 acres of ground which this company proposes to take will lapse within 15 years, and then, as has already happened in other instances, these open spaces will be covered with closely-built streets. I trust that the House, because of an imaginary danger, will not prevent the Bill going before a Committee. The Railway Companies, probably from some pique against the President of the Board of Trade in reference to railway rates, have withdrawn all their Bills; and this, involving an expenditure of some £5,000,000 or £6,000,000, is the only one remaining to be dealt with. I trust, therefore, we will not arrest important industrial enterprise simply because of such imaginary dangers as are brought forward.

Mr. SEAGER HUNT (Marylebone, W.): We have been told that we ought to support this Bill, because the hon. Baronet, who is the promoter, has selected the site for the terminus in St. John's Wood. Will the hon. Baronet say that he is prepared to drop the London portion of his Bill for this year? ["No!"] What, then, is the value of the assertion that he is prepared to adopt an alternative site?

*Sir E. WATKIN (Hythe): I rise to Order. I am not the promoter of this Bill. I am merely one of 12 Directors representing 12,000 shareholders, who are the promoters.

Mr. SEAGER HUNT: The hon. Baronet's position is quite important enough. If the London portion of the Bill were withdrawn, then the opposition, so far as St. John's Wood is concerned, would die away. The fact that certain residences would be spoiled, and that property would fall in value in consequence of this Bill, appeared to excite the derision of the hon. Member for Northampton. But the injury sustained by the owners of these properties is real; besides which, the erection of the terminus would adversely affect the squares and thoroughfares of Marylebone by drawing through them an immense amount of miscellaneous traffic. I sincerely trust that the Bill will not be read a second time.

(4.8.) MR. COURTNEY: If I am not mistaken, there is a feeling in the House that the Bill ought to go before a Committee; and I cannot help thinking that the questions which have been raised are questions which ought to be determined not by the House, but by the Committee, who would be able to compare the balance of gains and losses of the various districts outside the Metropolis and in London itself. I refer to the manufacturing towns of Manchester, Sheffield, and Leicester, and the agricultural County of Buckingham. There is no opposition in the Metropolis to the measure except in the area affected by it. I do not scoff at the gentlemen who, living in St. John's Wood, oppose the Bill; and I have no doubt that if I resided there I would oppose it tooth and nail to get the terminus sent elsewhere. My right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford suggests that the great railway termini should be near together, and no doubt that is desirable; but the question whether this is a desirable arrangement, as proposed by the Bill, is one which should be decided by the Committee, and is surely not one which the House could determine. I hope the House will refrain from deciding questions which can only be properly investigated and determined by a Committee.

(4.12.) MR. PICTON (Leicester): Had it not been that the Rules of the House prevented it, I would have presented to the House a Petition from Leicester, signed by the merchants and inhabitants of Leicester in favour of this Bill, on the ground that the line would give direct communication between London, Manchester, Nottingham, and Sheffield. The earnest desire of large trading populations ought to be taken into consideration, and certainly ought to weigh against the sentimental interests of the romantic neighbourhood of St. John's Wood.

(4.14.) MR. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid.): This line will run through about 15 miles of the Division which I represent, and a Petition has been presented to this House, signed by some 15,000 of the ratepayers and leaseholders. The Town Council of Loughborough have petitioned against the Bill, but, as far as I can ascertain, that is on a question of *locus standi* as regards the site of the local railway station. I can endorse what has been said as to the great advantages of this Bill to various industrial centres, and I hope my hon. Friends around me will not continue their opposition to the measure.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I merely rise to ask whether the time has not come when the House should decide this question? I think the growing practice in this House of debating these Bills on the Second Reading is a very undesirable one. We have under the pressure of public business begun Morning Sittings to-day, and what has become of this Morning Sitting? It has been devoted to what I call the most trumpery opposition to a railway undertaking that I have ever heard in the House of Commons. It carries us back to a period 40 years ago, when I remember the Great Northern Bill was thrown out on the opposition of the Badsworth Hunt, merely because it would interfere with sport in their district. Are we really going back to those days? It would almost seem so when we find an hon. Member getting up and saying that in the future some interest in Lord's Cricket Ground may be injured which is not injured now. This is the opposition which is offered to a Bill for the promotion of a great industrial undertaking which is to benefit hundreds of thousands of our population. A more discreditable vote could never be given by the House of Commons than a vote which would throw out such a measure on such grounds as these. To give such a vote would show that the House of Commons, which professes to be the representative of the interests of the people, prefers the amusements of the few to the interests of the many. I am quite certain that the House of Commons will not give such a vote as that. I am glad to see the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade in his place. I am quite sure that he is not about to vote against a Bill which, whatever else it does, must be for the benefit of the trade of the country, and of the district it will traverse, and of the great Metropolis it will serve. That these interests should be deliberately sacrificed by the House of Commons to the very trumpery interests set up in opposition to the Bill is a thing which I do not think will happen even at the end of the 19th century.

(4.18.) MR. WIGGIN (Staffordshire, Handsworth): It appears to me, from the speech just delivered by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Mundella) and the remarks made earlier in the day by the hon. Member for Chesterfield (Mr. Barnes), that an erroneous impression has been conveyed to the mind of the House that the Midland Railway Company are unable to carry the traffic up to London. The fact is that during the late intensely cold weather there was a great scarcity of coal trucks, and it was on account of the want of such trucks that the hon. Member for Chesterfield could not get his coal brought up to London. I am satisfied, from my own knowledge, that the North Western, the Great Northern, the Midland, and the Great Eastern Railway Companies, which pass through densely-populated districts of the country, are quite able to bring all their traffic up to London, and a great deal more if they could get it.

*MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I only rise to say that, in the opinion of the people of Manchester, which forms one of the termini of the proposed extension, this line ought to be made. We know that the line is one that would greatly lessen the cost of goods traffic from the great centres of northern industry to London, and we ought in these days of keen competition to welcome any investment that will promote improved facilities in the conduct of trade.

(4.22.) The House divided:—Ayes 212; Noes 103.—(Div. List, No. 89.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Motion made, and Question "That the Bill be committed to a Select Committee of Seven Members, Four to be nominated by the House and Three by the Committee of Selection,"—(*Mr. Boulnois*,)—put, and negatived.

Bill committed.

Ordered, "That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to take evidence, and to Report to the House whether the site of the terminus proposed in the Bill is the best which can be devised in the interest of the people of London."—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

Sir W. Harcourt

QUESTIONS.

THE SOUTH KENSINGTON SUBWAY.

COLONEL HAMBRO (Dorset, S.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if there is any foundation for the statement, made by Major General C. E. Webber, R.E., in a pamphlet which has been sent to Members of Parliament—

> "That Her Majesty's Government has given practical encouragement to the project called the South Kensington and Paddington Subway Tramway."

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (Mr. PLUNKET, Dublin University): The statement referred to in the question does not accurately represent the course taken by the Government with regard to the South Kensington and Paddington Tramway Bill—now withdrawn. The scheme had, I think, some good points, especially in so far as it aimed at providing better communication between the South Kensington Railway Station and the Albert Hall, and other public buildings in that neighbourhood, and no doubt the promoters believed that it would minister greatly to the wants of the public; but so far as it affected Kensington Gardens the view I took was that the making of the tramway would cause considerable inconvenience to the public during the time of its construction, and must involve the immediate loss of some fine trees, and serious risk to others, and that it would require a very strong case of public advantage to be made out on their side in order to overcome these objections. I was in correspondence in this sense with the promoters when the Bill was withdrawn; and I had not at any time undertaken to withhold opposition if the Bill should go to a Committee, much less did I ever promise to support it.

COUNTY COURT ELECTIONS.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, having regard to the difficulty of providing for an accurate revision of the County Electors' Lists, and to the probable addition to county expenditure and possible breakdown in the proceedings for revising the Lists before November 1st, he will consider the advisability of postponing the County Council elections to 1st January, 1892?

*The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): When I intimated to the House my intention of withdrawing the Registration Acceleration Bill I stated that I would consider what other proposal could be made to meet the difficulties in connection with the preparation of the Register. I have given the matter my consideration, with the result that I have had a Bill drawn postponing the elections for County Councils to January 15.

Mr. J. STUART (Shoreditch, Hoxton): Will that refer also to the election of the London County Council?

*Mr. RITCHIE: Yes.

STUDENTS IN TRAINING COLLEGES.

Mr. TALBOT (Oxford University): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether he is aware that students in residential training colleges have little more than four months to prepare for the matriculation examination at the London University, whereas students in the new day training colleges have the full academic year for the same purpose; and whether he proposes to remedy this apparent injustice?

*The VICE PRESIDENT of the COUNCIL (Sir W. Hart Dyke, Kent, Dartford): I am aware of the apparent anomaly; but it must not be forgotten that the day students have to pass their examination in technical subjects also in June, whereas the residential students have theirs deferred until December. It may be said, therefore, that although day students have the advantage on the matriculation examination, the residential students have the advantage on the certificate examination, as a whole, and can devote the first part of the year chiefly to academic, and the second to technical subjects.

CARDIFF DAY TRAINING COLLEGE.

Mr. POWELL (Wigan): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the prospectus of the Cardiff Day Training College, stating that—

> "In respect of the subjects in which normal students receive instruction in common with other students of the college, the Education Department accepts the results of the sessional examination conducted by the professors of the college"

as qualifying for a certificate of merit; and whether these examinations are held by the Department as equivalent to the independent and uniform examination of the Department for the same purpose?

*Sir W. HART DYKE: The Education Department recognise in day training colleges examinations by the examiners of the college, usually the college professors, in certain subjects, but the papers will be sent to the Department, and the marks will be re-assessed, so as to bring all students as nearly as possible into line. It may eventually be necessary to ask the colleges to appoint outside examiners, and also to submit the papers that are set to the Inspector of the district; but before laying down any rule, it has been thought expedient to wait for the experience of the first examinations in June and December.

ALLOTMENTS.

Mr. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the expenses of a Sanitary Authority incurred in acquiring land for allotments, which are required by Section two (2) of "The Allotments Act, 1887," to be recouped out of the rents, include the annual instalments of the principal of the purchase-money, or only the interest payable on the purchase-money?

*Mr. RITCHIE: The Local Government Board have been advised by the Law Officers that the expenses referred to in Sub-section 2 of Section 2 of the Allotments Act, 1887, include the interest payable upon the purchase-money, but not the annual instalments of principal or payments to a sinking fund in cases where lands has been acquired by means of a loan repayable by instalments.

MAIN ROADS AND COUNTY BRIDGES.

Mr. HOBHOUSE: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the cost of improving a main road or county bridge can be defrayed partly at the cost of a county and partly at the cost of the highway district or parish in which the road or bridge is situate; if so, what authority can rate the district or parish for such purpose; and, if so, whether he will consider the desirability of amending the Law on the first opportunity, in order to facilitate such equitable and convenient arrangements?

*MR. RITCHIE: As regards a county bridge, under ordinary circumstances a Highway Authority would not be empowered to contribute towards the construction or maintenance of such a bridge. Where, however, an entirely new structure is proposed, it might be practicable, under certain circumstances, to adopt the principle of joint contribution by the Highway Authority building the bridge and the County Council contributing to the cost under Section 22 of the Highways and Locomotives (Amendment) Act, 1878. With regard to a main road, I do not think there is any way in which a Highway Authority can directly contribute towards the cost of the improvement of a main road. Although I am not prepared to give any undertaking as to proposing legislation on these matters, the point is one of which I will make a note in the event of any legislation on the subject of roads being proposed.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether his attention has been called to that portion of the Annual Report of the Director of the National Gallery for 1890, in which he calls attention to the crowded state of the Gallery, and the impossibility of maintaining a systematic classification of the pictures until further accommodation is provided, and expresses a hope that the Treasury will not long delay to carry out the promise made by the First Commissioner of Works in 1889, that, inasmuch as the ground acquired for the extension of the National Gallery had been used for the National Portrait Gallery, the Government would, if more space were required for the National Gallery, remove St. George's Barracks elsewhere; whether the crowded state of the rooms, and the impossibility of hanging more pictures, now suggests an enlargement of the Gallery; and whether he will consider the advisability of removing St. George's Barracks, and thus ensure the safety of the National collection, which is now placed in the closest proximity to buildings and warehouses filled with inflammable goods, and exposed to constant risk of fire?

*MR. PLUNKET: I have read the Report of the Director of the National Gallery for 1890. The Government will, of course, be prepared to carry out the promise I made on their behalf in 1889—that, when they are satisfied that more space is required for the extension of the National Gallery, it should be found in the adjoining barrack-yard; and I am sure that any representation made to the Government by the Trustees of the National Gallery will receive very careful consideration. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that in 1887 a very large extension of the exhibition galleries was completed, at the cost of £50,000, by which five new rooms, a vestibule, and a staircase were added to the hanging space. No doubt it would be better if the galleries were entirely detached from the barracks, which at one point they now adjoin, but this matter has not been overlooked; and some years ago the divisional wall between the two buildings was carried up to a considerable height above the roof of the National Gallery, and all other possible precautions will continue to be taken for protection from fire.

*DR. FARQUHARSON: Is it not a fact that portions of the barracks are actually in contact with the Turner room, which contains some of the greatest Art treasures in the Gallery; and whether two fires have not already taken place in barracks in or near London?

*MR. PLUNKET: It is true that at one point the two buildings are very close together; but the precautions I have spoken of have already been taken, and we are at present considering a scheme for providing a better supply of water in case of fire.

ORDNANCE SURVEY IN SCOTLAND.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture if he can state when the postponed surveys on the 1-2,500 scale maps of the six Scotch counties, Fife and Kinross, Mid and East Lothian, Kirkcudbright and Wigtown, will be undertaken; and if he can inform the House what length of time it will take to complete their survey in Scotland on the 1-2,500 scale?

The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of AGRICULTURE (Mr. Chaplin, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): The arrangement for the re-survey of the six Scotch counties on the 1-2,500 scale is to employ upon it four of the field divisions now engaged in re-surveying Lancashire and Yorkshire on the same scale. One of these divisions will commence work in Edinburghshire during the course of the present year, and the others, I hope, next year. The work in Lancashire and Yorkshire has been so heavy, and the town areas have been so large, that the re-survey has taken longer than was expected; it is, therefore, not possible at present to say when the three divisions will commence work in Scotland. No accurate estimate could at present be made of the date when the re-survey of the Scotch counties will be completed, but when once taken up it will be pushed forward as quickly as possible. The levellers are already at work in advance of the re-survey.

Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): Do I understand there is no prospect of the survey of Fife being completed within a measurable time?

Mr. CHAPLIN: I am afraid I cannot add anything to the answer I have given.

ACCIDENT AT HIGHBURY STATION.

Mr. CHANNING: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the evidence at the inquest on George Wells, a platelayer of the North London Railway Company, who was killed at Highbury Station at 9 a.m. on 6th February, from which it appears that Wells came on duty at 6 a.m. on 5th February, worked till 5.30 p.m., resumed duty at 11 p.m. on the 5th, and would, if he had not been killed, have continued on duty till 5.30 p.m. on the 6th, and thus was on duty no less than 21½ hours, divided by an interval of only 5½ hours' rest, up to the time of his death, and would, if the accident had not occurred, have been on duty for 30 hours, with an interval of only 5½ hours; and whether the Board of Trade have made representations to the North London Railway Company, with a view to the prevention of such excessive hours of work; and whether he will consider the advisability of requiring Railway Companies, in the Reports they send in of fatalities and injuries occurring to individual workmen on their lines, to state the number of hours at which such workmen have been employed previous to the occurrences?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): My attention has been called to the fatal accident referred to, and I have received a communication from the Railway Company on the subject. The company state that on February 5th the deceased platelayer had been working at his ordinary duties from 7 in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon; but, after having rested until half-past 11, was specially employed on overtime in a relaying operation, which could not be carried out until after the passenger traffic had ceased. They attribute the accident to failure on the part of another company's driver to give warning. I shall be glad to show the hon. Member the correspondence on the subject. I will consider the question of the Reports.

ACCIDENTS IN MINES.

Mr. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid) (in the absence of Mr. Arthur Williams, Glamorgan, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government are prepared to take steps for giving practical effect to the recommendation of the Accidents in Mines Commission that there should be—

> "An official establishment of some permanent arrangement by which the merits of inventions and suggestions affecting the working of mines may be investigated promptly, thoroughly, and authoritatively."

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): I do not think that this suggestion is one which can be usefully carried out. Experience shows that the value of scientific discoveries is best tested by actual use and through the operation of a free and open market. I always communicate to the Inspectors, and through them to the mining industry, any new invention which appears to secure greater safety in the working of coal mines; but colliery owners and managers would not readily accept as authoritative the decisions of an official Board of Investigation.

AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN RAILWAY TARIFFS.

Mr. S. T. EVANS (in the absence of Mr. Arthur Williams): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he will obtain and lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the Belgian and Austro-Hungarian tariffs for goods and passengers on the State Railways in those countries, showing the rates and distances in English money and miles, and a copy of the State Returns for 1888, showing the financial working of the railways in those countries?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: I have not the information referred to by the hon. Member; but I am in communication with the Foreign Office, with a view of ascertaining whether all or any of it can be procured.

GAME IMPORTS FROM NORWAY.

Mr. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he can state or give as a Return the quantity of game imported from Norway during the first quarter of 1890?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: The import lists do not distinguish game from poultry. The imports of game and poultry from Norway in the first quarter of 1890 amounted to £3,246 in value, of which the great bulk is believed to have consisted of game.

HOSIERY MANUFACTURE ACT.

Mr. PICTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the case of "James Holmes *v.* Frederic Hardwick" in the County Court of Leicester, 2nd December, 1890, in which a claim was made for penalties under "The Hosiery Manufacture (Wages) Act, 1874;" whether he has observed that, notwithstanding the provisions of the above Act for the payment of—

> "The full and entire amount of all wages, the earnings of labour in the hosiery manufacture . . . . . . without any deduction or stoppage of any description whatsoever,"

it was found that the law was powerless to prevent an arrangement by which workmen, after payment of their wages, were expected to pay back, and did pay back, 10 per cent. to their employer; and whether he will consider the desirability of introducing an amending Act for the purpose of preventing an evasion by which Sections 2 and 7 of the above Act, so far as they forbid contracts contrary to its tenour, are made null and void?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have seen the case of "Holmes *v.* Hardwick," which was tried in the Leicester County Court on December 2 last, and, as I understand it, the deductions then in question were held not to be in fact frame rents. There was consequently no evasion of Sections 2 and 7 of the Act in question. The Judge offered to state a case to decide the point. The statute in question appears to me sufficiently stringent and penal, and I am not prepared to amend it.

EXAMINATION FOR FOREIGN OFFICE

Mr. PICTON: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether there is any intention to adopt the recommendation made in paragraph 25, page 9, of the Fourth Report of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, namely—

> "That there should be one Foreign Service, entered by limited competition, and on the same examination as that which now obtains for the Foreign Office;"

whether political economy is now excluded from the prescribed subjects in examinations for the Foreign Office; and whether, in view of the importance of the subject to members of the Diplomatic Services, from whom information is expected on the trade, commerce, and public economy of foreign countries, the Lords of the Treasury will insist that, if there is to be only one Foreign Service and one examination, political economy shall be an essential subject in that examination?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): There will in future be one examination qualifying for both the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Services. Political economy will be omitted from the examination. The subjects of examination are settled by the Secretary of State.

THE GREENOCK POLICE FORCE.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the attention of the Secretary for Scotland has been called to the dissatisfaction which exists among the police force of Greenock at the scale of pensions awarded to them under the Act of last year; and whether, in drawing up that scale, any consideration was given to the fact that in Greenock alone in Scotland a police pension fund, showing a large surplus largely constituted of contributions from the men, existed at the date of the passing of the Act; and, if not, if the Scotch Office will consider whether the members of the Greenock force cannot in some way be recouped for the exceptional sacrifices which for many years they were called upon to make?

***THE LORD ADVOCATE** (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): Yes, Sir; the Secretary for Scotland has received representations showing the existence of some dissatisfaction among the members of the Force; but after giving the most careful attention to the question he does not think there is any real ground for complaint. A reference to the Act, and to the evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Bill, will show that the existence of the Police Pension Fund at Greenock was taken into full consideration by Parliament when the Bill was under discussion; and there appears to be no reason to think that any departure is now necessary from the decision deliberately arrived at for dealing with the fund.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): There is a strong feeling on the subject, and, therefore, I should like to know whether the decision of the Department is final?

***MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON**: When the Select Committee was sitting gentlemen were sent up to represent the interests of the Force. The case was very carefully considered, and I think if any dissatisfaction exists it is due to a misunderstanding of the results that were brought out in the inquiry.

THE POST OFFICE MESSENGER SERVICE.

DR. CAMERON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, considering that the Post Office has never proposed to undertake the so-called "Electric Call System," or the carriage of letters by special messengers, as proposed by the Boy Messengers Company, it is his intention to avail himself of monopolies vested in the Post Office, but not utilised by that Department, to prevent the establishment by private enterprise of services which would tend to the convenience of the public? and as I understand the Postmaster General has it in contemplation to institute some new Messenger Service, possibly he can give the House some information in regard to that Service.

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton) had the following question on the Paper:—To ask the Postmaster General whether it is true that he intends to stop the carrying of written communications by the Boy Messengers Company, Limited; and, if so, whether it will be legal for the public to send those communications by Commissionaires, cabs, and private messengers?

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Alban's): I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman if it is true that arrangements have already been made whereby letters may be taken to railway booking offices, and forwarded thence at a cost of 3d.; and whether these facilities will be accorded equally to the Boy Messengers and District Messengers Companies?

***THE POSTMASTER GENERAL** (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): I have given directions for the establishment of a service which will, I believe, meet such public demand as exists for the more rapid transmission of single letters. I have to point out that it is my duty to protect the public interests entrusted to the Post Office by Act of Parliament, and I cannot, therefore, without dereliction of duty, allow organised services for the collection and delivery of letters or the transmission of telegrams to be set up side by side with those of the Department. In reply to the question of the noble Marquess (the Marquess of Carmarthen), I have to say I am advised that the conveyance and delivery of letters by the company is illegal, and if continued it will be my duty to take such proceedings as may be necessary to prevent infringement of the law. A person wishing to send a letter on his own private affairs may legally employ a special messenger on his own account.

I hope the new service will be in operation at the latest by Wednesday in next week, and it will consist of boy messengers, who will be attached to all the principal post offices in London, where their services can be requisitioned, as they are now at the offices such as are open of the Boy Messenger Company. As we have a very large staff of telegraphic messengers always on hand waiting at those offices it is believed we shall be able to render very much more efficient service with a small addition to the present force than that which the Boy Messenger Company is at the present time offering to the public. In regard to the question of the noble Lord the Member for Hertford, I have to say that an arrangement has been made with the Railway Companies to enable letters to be conveyed by railway which cannot be conveyed by post—that is, letters posted after the time when the mails are sent off. This arrangement does not apply to the Boy and District Messengers Companies, as their operations will be in competition with the service we propose to establish.

DR. CAMERON: Will any arrangements answering to the electric call system be made?

*MR. RAIKES: The matter is under the consideration of my expert advisers, and it is hoped and believed that some such service can be established.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the system he proposes to establish will be extended to provincial towns?

THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN: Will there be a number of boys always at the service of the public; and will it be necessary to come to Parliament for a Supplementary Vote?

*MR. RAIKES: I do not think it will be necessary to come to Parliament for a Supplementary Vote. As regards the question put by my hon. Friend behind me, I shall be very glad, if the experiment succeeds in London, to consider how far and in what cases it may be introduced in the large provincial towns.

BANKERS' BALANCE SHEETS.

MR. ATKINSON (Boston): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with reference to the paragraph in Saturday's *Times*, saying—

> "There is reason to believe that the Chancellor of the Exchequer does not propose to give legislative effect to the suggestion that private banks should be compelled to publish periodical balance sheets,"

if this statement is correct; and if he intends to try to give legislative effect to any suggestion that Joint Stock Banks should be so compelled?

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I believe it will be unnecessary to exercise any compulsory powers as to the more frequent publication of balance-sheets, as I have reason to believe that the Joint Stock Banks will themselves act in this direction. I have heard rumours to the effect that my hon. Friend informed the banks that they need not fear that I should be able to bring any compulsion to bear on them; and I must not be lured by the question into any declaration that in no case would I ask Parliament for compulsory powers; but I shall be most gratified if the Joint Stock Banks should, as I expect they will, meet public opinion and the circumstances of the day of their own accord.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND.

MR. ATKINSON: I also wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will state when the present agreement with the Bank of England expires; what are its terms and conditions; whether he proposes to make any change in the agreement now to be made; and for how many years he proposes to make it?

MR. GOSCHEN: The Bank of England holds its banking privileges, including issue of notes, upon condition of making certain payments to the Exchequer, under the Bank Act of 1844, but subject to redemption upon 12 months' notice and on repayment by Parliament of the debt due by Government to the Bank. The Bank of England manages the Public Debt at certain rates of remuneration fixed by the Act of 1861. These rates continued in force until the 5th of April, 1886, and thenceforward until Parliament shall otherwise direct. The Bank of England transacts the ordinary banking business of the Government, having the use in return of the Government balances. This agreement can be revised at any time. I have at present under consideration the arrangements between the Government and the Bank.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government of Newfoundland will be directly represented at the arbitration on the "French Shore Difficulty" by a delegate from the Colony or only through the Foreign Office?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: Her Majesty's Government have invited the Government of Newfoundland to name a delegate with full local knowlege to represent the colony on the Board of Arbitration, but no final answer has yet been received.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I understand that the sanction of Parliament will be necessary in regard to the arbitration, and I wish to know when that sanction will be asked for?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The attention of Parliament will be invited to the subject in the course of a few days, but not in this House.

GAMBLING AT HORSE RACES.

SIR GEORGE CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if his attention has been called to the measures taken against gambling at horse races in France, alleged to be occasioned by the great development of such gambling among all classes; and whether the Government will consider the propriety of taking measures to put down the evil in Great Britain?

MR. MATTHEWS: I can only repeat the answer which I gave on the 5th inst.—that my attention has been called to this matter, and that the Government, while they will do their best to enforce the existing law, do not contemplate legislation on this subject.

PROPOSED BOOKSTALL FOR THE LOBBY.

MR. ATKINSON: I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works if he can arrange for a bookstall somewhere in the Lobby for the convenience of Members wishing to buy and post newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, &c.?

MR. PLUNKET: In answer to the question of the hon. Gentleman, I do not think I can arrange for a bookstall in the Lobby for the convenience of Members wishing to buy and post newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets. I do not know of any place in the Lobby that would be suitable for the establishment of such a bookstall. On some nights the Lobby is crowded, and the bookstall might be an inconvenience.

KING JA JA.

MR. CHANNING, for Sir WALTER FOSTER (Derby, Ilkeston): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether King Ja Ja has been removed from St. Vincent to Barbados; whether his servants refused to accompany him, and consequently caused him great inconvenience and annoyance; whether his wife also declined to be transported to Barbados; and whether, considering that it is now some seven months since he was informed that it was Her Majesty's gracious will and pleasure to order his release and re-conveyance to Opobo, he can fix a date for his return to his own country?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: The Governor of Barbados telegraphed on the 11th inst. that Ja Ja had arrived much improved in health. We have not heard any particulars. It is impossible to say at what date the political situation at Opobo will admit of his return. He will be sent back as soon as the circumstances are sufficiently favourable.

TELEGRAPHING FIGURES.

MR. MACLEAN (Oldham): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether his attention has been called to an article in the *Journalist* of 7th March, in which it is stated that, without making any concession to journalists, if he would arrange to allow figures, which take only a tenth of the time to write and the Department much less time to transmit, to be telegraphed as cheaply as the words which spell the figures, both journalists and the Department would be benefited, as the work would be done by each in less time, the transmission of Press messages would be accelerated, and the Department would receive the same payment for considerably less labour; and whether he will consider the expediency of giving effect to this recommendation ?

*MR. RAIKES : I have read the article in question, and I find that both the newspaper and the hon. Member have shifted their ground. What they originally sought was the assimilation of the method of counting figures in Press telegrams with that which obtains in regard to ordinary telegrams. A concession was involved in such assimilation, and I was not prepared to grant it. The suggestion now made is, that a new method of counting should be adopted. I have considered this method, but I do not regard it as being preferable to the present one, which affords greater security for accuracy in transmission.

THE PAINTED HALL AT GREENWICH.

MR. BOORD (Greenwich): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he is aware that the Painted Hall at Greenwich is being stripped of the greater part of the pictures and relics which form the chief attraction to visitors ; whether it is also intended to remove the principal models from the College buildings ; and when the several objects removed will be replaced ?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD, Lancashire, Ormskirk) : In the unavoidable absence of my noble Friend at the head of the Admiralty, I beg to state that a considerable number of the pictures, relics, and naval models now at Greenwich will be moved to London to form part of the collection to be shown at the Royal Naval Exhibition. From the liberality with which private owners have responded to the appeal made to them, that section of the Exhibition relating to naval pictures and portraits, marine models, and relics, promises to be quite unique from its magnitude and unbroken historical continuity. My hon. Friend could hardly expect that, when private individuals are thus bestirring themselves to assist the Naval Exhibition, the one great national collection of naval pictures and models should not contribute its share, especially when the inhabitants of Greenwich have in ordinary years the benefit of a gratuitous access to the only naval exhibition of pictures and models in the country supported by national funds. The pictures and models will return to Greenwich when the Exhibition is over.

CO-PARTNERSHIP AND PROFIT SHARING.

MR. CHANNING : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the questions of co-partnership and profit-sharing will be included in the scope of the Reference to the Royal Commission on Labour ?

*MR. W. H. SMITH : I must ask the hon. Member to wait till the terms of Reference are before the House.

THE LEICESTERSHIRE REGIMENT IN BERMUDA.

SIR W. BARTTELOT (Sussex, N.W.) : I beg to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War a question of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether his attention has been called to a letter in to-day's *Times* from Lieutenant-General Newdegate, Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bermuda, exonerating the men of the 1st. Battalion of the Leicestershire Regiment from the disgraceful charges made against them sometime ago in a Dalziel telegram from New York ? I have thought it right, Sir, to ask this question publicly in the House in the interests of a most gallant and deserving regiment ; and I would venture further to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman has received any additional information in relation to this matter ?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle) : I have seen the statement referred to by my hon. Friend, and from this, as well as from other information which has reached me, I am glad to be able to repeat what I have already stated in this House on a telegraphic despatch, that it is clear that what I then said was correct, and that the honour of a very distinguished regiment is entirely freed from an unfounded charge of insubordination.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR G. TREVELYAN (Bridgeton, Glasgow) : I should like to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether I am right in understanding him to have said that the Lords' Amendments to the Tithes Bill will be taken on Thursday.

I would also ask whether he can state what business will be taken on Friday?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have every reason to hope that it will be possible to take the Lords' Amendments to the Tithes Bill on Thursday.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Will it be the first Order?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It will be substantially the first Order, although we may have to take one or two small matters before it. I shall, however, be able to make a positive statement to-morrow on the subject. Arrangements have been made by which we hope to get the Amendments made by the Lords printed and circulated to-morrow, or, at all events, made available to hon. Members at 12 o'clock. On Friday we shall proceed with the Bills which are on the Paper for to-day, and with other Bills.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: Will the right hon. Gentleman say definitely when the Government will move the Speaker out of the Chair for the Civil Service Estimates?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope to do so on Monday, but we must take these measures by themselves first of all. One business must be finished before we go on with the other.

NATIONAL DEBT.

Return ordered—

"Showing, at the close of each financial year from 1835-6 to 1890-91, both inclusive, the aggregate Gross Liabilities of the State as represented by the Nominal Funded Debt, Estimated Capital Value of Terminable Annuities, Unfunded Debt and other Liabilities in respect of Debt, the estimated Assets, and the aggregate Net Liabilities, also the Exchequer Balances; and showing at the close of each financial year from 1835-6 to 1890-91, both inclusive, the Gross and Net Expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund on account of the National Debt, and other payments in respect of Debt (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 343, of Session 1890)."—(*Sir William Harcourt*)

NAVY (SHIPS AVAILABLE, 1ST APRIL, 1891.)

Return ordered—

"Of the Vessels in the Channel and Home Waters (exclusive of the Channel Squadron) available at very short notice, on the 1st day of April, 1891, under the several heads and conditions set forth in the Statement of the First Lord of the Admiralty, dated 4th day of March, 1890, namely:—

'(1.) Four Ironclads in commission as Flagships at Home ports fully commissioned having all their stores on board ready at a few hours' notice:

'(2.) Nine Armour-clads, in Commission, connected with Coastguard, ready for sea in 48 hours;

'(3.) Vessels in First-class Steam Reserve in Home ports, comprising, as from the 1st day of July, 1890, six Ironclads, two Belted Cruisers, and 16 Cruisers, besides Coast Defence Vessels and Gun and Torpedo Boats, these Vessels to be ready in five days or less;'

stating the names of each of such Vessels, its displacement tonnage, thickness of armour, armament, and speed, and showing whether they were all at the above date provided with guns, and with stores, ammunition, and crews at hand, so as to be in all respects fit to go to sea within the prescribed periods."

"And of the same particulars in respect of the Channel Squadron at the same date."—(*Sir William Harcourt.*)

STANDING COMMITTEE (CHAIRMEN'S PANEL).

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN reported from the Chairmen's Panel: That they had appointed Mr. Campbell-Bannerman to act as Chairman of the Standing Committee on Law, and Courts of Justice, and Legal Procedure.

Report to lie upon the Table.

COLONISATION

Report from the Select Committee, with Minutes of Evidence, brought up and read;

Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 152.]

MOTION.

MAINTENANCE OF DESTITUTE PARENTS BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Bruce, Bill to amend the Law relating to the means of compelling persons to maintain their Destitute Parents, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bruce, Mr. Gully, Mr. Dugdale, and Mr. Lockwood.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 250.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY—REPORT.

Resolutions [16th March] reported.

First four Resolutions [see pages 1089-1096] agreed to.

Fifth Resolution [see page 1096] read a second time.

*(5.15.) DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I rise to move the reduction

of this amount by the nominal sum of £1,000 on the Vote to account which it embraces for Scotch Education. I do so for the purpose of obtaining from the Government an assurance that in the expenditure of this money they will take care that the control of Parliament over the finances of the nation shall not be set at naught, and that the law shall not be disregarded. I do so in consequence of a remarkable Report which has been made by the Auditor General on the Scotch Education Vote. According to the Education Act of 1870, which is stated by the Auditor General to be binding in Scotland, no school is eligible for the annual grant in which the ordinary payment for the scholar in respect of elementary education exceeds the sum of 9d. per week. A further definition in the Scotch Act excludes schools in which the major part of the education does not consist of elementary instruction, but instruction in Latin, Greek, mathematics, natural science, and generally the higher branches of knowledge, from being deemed to be primary schools, and enacts that they should be deemed to be higher class schools. Now the Auditor General explained in his Report that from certain circumstances that came under his notice he was led to suspect that a number of public schools in Scotland received a share of this education grant which did not come within the definition of primary schools for which the grant is intended. I believe that in some previous year the Auditor General brought the subject under the notice of the Committee upon Public Accounts. Friction has existed for some time between the Department of the Auditor General and the Scotch Office on the subject; but at all events, according to this Report, the matter has now been brought before Parliament, and is to be found set forth in the Appropriation Accounts. It appears that a stated case on the subject was laid before the English and Scotch law officers, and that on the 3rd of May last the opinion was pronounced by a majority of them to the effect that, though the average amount of fees paid afforded a guide for determining the scale of fees, it was a question to be determined in each particular instance by whether a large number of scholars did or did not pay more than 9d. a week. Immediately on this opinion of the Law Officers being placed before him, the Auditor General applied to the Scotch Office, and said that as a matter of fact was involved it would be necessary before he could pass the accounts that in many instances a joint investigation should be carried on between his own Department and the Scotch Office, and that the inquiry should be undertaken locally into the real facts of the case. The Scotch Office, however, refused to accede to this request. Later another request of the same kind was made to the Office, and on that occasion they acceded to it, under protest. But shortly afterwards the Office withdrew from their agreement to the proposal, and the matter was left standing where it was. The Auditor General has pointed out that by their withdrawal, as the Estimates have been prepared and his Report brought before Parliament, any possibility of investigation has been thrown over for a number of weeks or months, and the whole matter delayed for another year. Now, the Auditor General, although he was not able to get the facts of the case in a number of schools which he suspected, and where the returns were stigmatised by him as erroneous and misleading, examined for himself the prospectuses of a number of schools and the admissions and explanations sent up by them. In the cases put before him by the schools themselves he surcharged the grants in the case of 15 of them, and he said he could not pass grants to the extent of £12,000 odd in connection with a number of schools which in his view were not within the class of schools to which this grant in aid of primary education should be made. I know different views are held in this House as to whether it is desirable that those public School Board schools should be carried on in the style which the Auditor General refused to pass. The Auditor General tells us that in certain schools, of which he gives the prospectuses, a very efficient course of higher education is provided, with readings in the higher classics. I know many hon. Members consider that it is desirable this class of education should be encouraged from educational grants, while others hold a different opinion. I am not going into that question, however. What I maintain is that it is a matter of Constitutional importance, when Parliament passes an Act prescribing the way in which certain money is to be expended, when the Government refer to their own Law Officers the interpretation of that Act of Parliament, and when it receives from them an explicit interpretation, that hon. Members should have a right to demand that the Government shall not go outside the law in giving away public money to purposes for which it has never been provided for by Parliament. To some of my Colleagues from Scotland it may not much matter if they get a little more out of the Imperial Treasury, but I do not regard the matter in that light at all. I know that some hon. Members from Scotland are so exclusively nationalist in their sympathies that if they could get an extra £15,000 out of the Treasury they would accept it with gratitude; but it must be remembered, in connection with this, that any unfair distribution of the ordinary grants to education in Scotland carries with it an unfair distribution of the extraordinary grant, which is limited in amount, and every school in Scotland not entitled to that grant which participates in it diminishes by that extent the amount divisible among the other schools legally entitled to participate. I have no desire to interfere with the discretion of the Committee on Public Accounts, or in any way to forestall its deliberations. My object in bringing forward this matter is a purely practical one. This is a Vote on Account, and it refers to money which will be distributed next year, and I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will give a pledge, if the House grants this £100,000 on account, that until the question is settled no portion of it shall be allocated in any case in which the Auditor General has any doubt as to the legality of the grant. If the contention of the Auditor General is correct, those payments are illegal, and it would require an Act of Parliament to set the matter right. What I contend is that while the law remains as it is it should be administered. If, on the other hand, it is disputed that the law is as laid down by the Auditor General on the *dictum* of the majority of the Scotch and English Law Officers of the Crown, then I contend that, pending an investigation of the matter by the Committee on Public Accounts, and pending the submission of this House of some remedial proposal by the Government, no portion of the money should be paid in grants with regard to the legality of which the Auditor General has any doubt. I ask the Treasury to give that assurance, and beg to move the reduction of the Vote.

Amendment proposed, to leave out "£3,917,003," and insert "£3,916,003."—(*Dr. Cameron.*)

Question proposed, "That '£3,917,003' stand part of the Resolution."

(5.30.) THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): The hon. Member may rest assured that the matter will be carefully considered by the Treasury. There is no Parliamentary work which is more carefully done than this, and the special attention of the Public Accounts Committee will be drawn to the point.

(5.32) MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): The Accountant General has gone into elaborate detail to show that the School Board Returns are practically fallacious. The whole gist of the Report is that Returns are made which have the effect of deceiving him, and he asks that an officer of the Education Department and one from his own Department should be sent into the localities to inquire whether these Returns are correct or not. I venture to say that no Government Department would refuse such an appeal from the Accountant General; yet the Scotch Education Department refuse to assist in making such a local investigation. Why? Because they know that these Returns are fallacious, and that the Government have been defrauded by them. What interest can any Department of the Government have in refusing to make a local inquiry which would have no other effect than to show how the facts stand? There is no use in having an Accountant General at all if he is not to have the means of ascertaining whether the Returns presented to him are true or false. If it were only the Government that was being defrauded I do not suppose that any Scotch Member would say one word about it. It is not, however, a question in which the Government alone are concerned. In Glasgow the question assumes an important aspect. There the School Board says: "We have not got sufficient money from the Government to free all the compulsory standards, so that it is necessary to have certain fee-paying schools to make up the deficiency." In the case of the school at Lenzie the accommodation is for 560 children, and the average attendance is only 201. Why is that school more than half empty? It is on account of the school fees, which are so high that the children have to walk a mile and a half to go to the free school, and some of them find it cheaper to pay the railway fare to Glasgow than to attend the fee-paying school. It is, therefore, not merely a question of defrauding the Revenue, but one in which the people in the localities suffer. It is only those who can afford to pay exorbitant fees who can send their children to school in these localities. The refusal of the Scotch Education Department to accede to the Accountant General's request that a local investigation should take place, is due to the fact that they know perfectly well the effect would be to upset many of the Returns sent in, and to show that schools are receiving grants which they are not entitled to. I hope, therefore, whatever course the Scotch Education Department may have taken in the past, the Government will back up the Accountant General in this, that there is nothing to conceal, and that there is no reason why, if a fair inquiry is asked for, any obstacle should be imposed in the way of that inquiry.

(5.41.) THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The hon. Member is hardly well advised in referring to a question which is at present *sub judice.* There is no indisposition on the part of the Government to get at the true facts of the case, but it is not a matter of plain sailing. In the first place, it is not quite clear what set of facts it is necessary to have in order to ascertain whether a grant is earned and is payable by the Education Department or not. The wording of the Act is such that it gives rise to difference of opinion among the Law Officers, and a certain amount of consideration is required in order to arrive at a proper

standard as to what school is and what is not entitled to receive the grant. One view is that a certain proportion of schools must pay less than 9d. before the school can receive the grant, but there are other competing views. Counter proposals were made in correspondence between the Education Department and the Accountant General, and no agreement was come to, but I have no doubt the merits of that difference will be stated before the Public Accounts Committee, who will form their own opinion. The question involves large public interests in the distribution of the grant, and deserves dispassionate consideration.

*(5.45.) SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I think from the view expressed just now by the Secretary to the Treasury, it is obvious that this is not the moment to enter into a discussion of the merits of this question, but I think the hon. Member for Glasgow deserves credit for having brought this matter forward, because so strong a Report has not been made by the Controller and Auditor General to the House of Commons on any other subject in any part of the Estimates. My hon. Friend has long been opposed to these fee-paying schools as a matter of public policy, and he asked the House of Commons clearly to understand that, so far as judgment has hitherto been passed on the question in concern, the result of this defect in public policy has been that considerable financial abuses had occurred. We understand from the Secretary to the Treasury that the whole question will be inquired into by the Public Accounts Committee, and that it will be seen whether the Scotch Education Department should have responded to the invitation of the Comptroller and Auditor General and whether the Public Accounts Committee wish them to respond to it now. I was not surprised to hear that the Treasury pay the greatest respect to the opinions of the Committee on Public Accounts, and that there is not the least probability, or even possibility, of money being paid on account of any Service of which the Committee may disapprove.

MR. JACKSON: That is in the ordinary course.

*SIR G. TREVELYAN: Yes; in the ordinary course. Under the circumstances I must say I think my hon.

Friend would do well to withdraw his Motion. I am, however, extremely glad he brought it forward, if for no other reason, because the other day a most important official of the Glasgow School Board declared that the whole thing was a mare's nest. I think the hon. Gentleman, as a Member of the House of Commons, is quite justified in calling attention to the fact that the Comptroller and Auditor General, a high officer of the House of Commons, has reported on this matter as the principal financial question of the year, and that the matter is not one to be regarded lightly.

(5.50.) MR. ANGUS SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): As one who knows something about education, and the necessity for secondary education in Scotland, I am by no means sorry that the policy pursued by the Scotch Education Department has brought them into this difficulty. They tried to establish in connection with the education of Scotland a second grade system, under which there would have been odious distinction between classes of scholars attending the schools; and that was the origin of the difficulties in which they now find themselves. I trust that that is a policy which will be abandoned by the Scotch Education Department, and that they will revert to the ancient system which has existed in Scotland for centuries, under which there are no distinctions at all.

*(5.52.) MR. LENG (Dundee): This controversy is of great interest to the School Boards who will be affected by the decision. In my constituency there is one school which alone receives a grant of £1,354, and it will be readily conceived that if this grant had been disallowed very serious inconvenience would have been caused to the School Board of Dundee. At the same time, I quite concur that this matter should be sifted. The School Boards have for some years past conducted their schools on the understanding that if the average fee does not exceed 9d. in the week the grants will be given. In Harris Academy, Dundee, there are 554 scholars paying more than 9d. a week; 196 paying exactly 9d.; 346 paying 8d.; and 108 paying 7d. per week. The fees above 9d. are stated to range from 10d. to 1s. 0½d. per week, while the reputed average fee is only 8·7d. Certainly the School Board in Dundee has conducted this school on the clear understanding with the Scotch Education Department that if they have an average under 9d. these grants would be given. Therefore, I think that whatever may be the decision as to strict legality, the inconvenience which will be caused by altogether withholding the grant should be avoided.

*(5.54.) MR. SINCLAIR (Falkirk, &c.): I hope the hon. Member will withdraw his Motion; but, at the same time, I am not sorry—as other speakers have said—that the subject should have been brought forward. I should not have risen if some hon. Members had not taken it for granted that the feeling of Scotland is against these high fee schools. No doubt there is a feeling against them in some quarters, but it is by no means universal. These schools have done good work, and they continue to do good work. It must never be forgotten that our Scotch system of education is carried out under an Education Act, and not an Elementary Education Act, as is the case in England. There is no limit of fees in the original Scotch Act, but by an accident or slip of legislation the 9d. limit, which is in the English Act, was introduced into the Scotch system. I trust the appeals which were made to the Government at the time when the fees were removed from the compulsory standards, to define for the future what should and what should not constitute the 9d. limit, will, in consequence of the present difficulty, be carefully reconsidered by them. I trust that during the present Session the Government will deal with this question by legislation.

(5.56.) MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): The point here is that a deliberate attempt has been made to deceive the Treasury and the Education Department in regard to the amount of fees charged in certain Board Schools, especially in Glasgow. The Lord Advocate just now said the case was not one of plain sailing, and that there is a good deal to be said on both sides. No doubt there is a good deal to be said on both sides as to the question of the average 9d. fee, and whether you should take it for the whole of the children or only for individual children; but what is charged by the Comptroller and Auditor General is that there has been a deliberate attempt made to evade the law and suppress the amount of fees that were being charged by false Returns and misrepresentation of the whole case. I hope the matter will be discussed fully by the Public Accounts Committee tomorrow. No doubt there will be a field day. I hope my hon. Friend will not divide the House, though it is the worst case ever mentioned in the Report of the Auditor General.

*(5.58.) MR. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I agree that the allegations that have been made against the action of some of the School Boards as to the making of these Returns are of a serious character; but that is a matter for the Public Accounts Committee. My hon. Friend the Member for Poplar is a Member of the Committee, as I am myself, and I am sure will agree with me in asking that these allegations should not at this stage be assumed by the House to have been proved. There will be extremely delicate questions which we shall have to consider in the Public Accounts Committee to-morrow, and I do not think we ought now to pronounce any judgment on them.

*(5.59.) DR. CAMERON: I never asked for the pronouncement of a judgment. All I asked of the Government was that, pending the decision of the matter, the Government should not use any of this money in this manner. We have received an assurance that the Government will give due weight to the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee, and will be guided by their Report. As, therefore, my object has been effected, I will not trouble the House to go to a Division.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Resolution agreed to.

Subsequent Resolution [see page 1176] agreed to.

Resolutions [March 16th] reported.

WAYS AND MEANS.

"1. That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the years ending on the 31st day of March, 1890 and 1891, the sum of £249,800 10s. 11d. be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

"2. That, towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty for the Service of the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, the sum of £3,917,103 be granted out of the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom."

Resolutions agreed to.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, that they have power to make provision therein pursuant to the said Resolutions.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Considered in Committee, and reported, with an amended Title; as amended, to be considered to-morrow, at Twelve of the clock.

SAVINGS BANKS BILL.—(No. 220.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

*(6.5.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I should like to say a few words upon this Bill, which deals with a subject in which I take the greatest interest. I think we shall all agree the Bill is a step in the right direction—in the direction of doing something towards making deposits in Trustee Savings Banks more secure. It is not an ideal Bill; it is not quite the idea that, if I had my own way, I should have liked to carry out. It would, perhaps, have been wiser to have made an arrangement by which the large banks should have developed like those have of a private nature, and been carried on under special charter, in a way most likely to increase the thrift of a district. Of course, banks are hampered by conditions that obtain in large institutions like the Glasgow Bank, and others which are carried on very well; and had this plan been adopted the smaller banks would have gradually closed and been absorbed by the Post Office Savings Bank. The scheme of the Bill, however, is very reasonable. The Bill really does two things, and is based on the recommendations of the Committee appointed by the House two years ago. It establishes a Board of Inspection or, what may possibly be called, a Board of Audit, and gives much greater power to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt. I am not quite sure that this is wise, but I do not see

that we can put into anybody else's hands the same power, which must exist, in order that the object of the Bill may be carried out. The history of these banks everybody knows. They have succeeded in doing good service to the State in the past, and have been admirably conducted; while, no doubt, considering the enormous amount of money passing through them, there have been very few lapses. The amount of money depositors have lost, considering the hundreds of millions passing through the banks, has been very small—a great credit to the management. The rules we now have were framed by Act of Parliament, and are, no doubt, satisfactory in every way to secure, if carried out, proper management; but the difficulty has been in all cases that there has been no power, no controlling authority to see that the rules were carried out. The Bill accomplishes that object; it appoints a body of persons who will see that the Regulations advanced by the Act of Parliament are carried out. Three chief duties will devolve on the Inspection Committee. They must make a complete overhaul of existing Savings Banks, and this is no small matter seeing that there are over 300 banks holding 45,000,000 sterling, and having 1,500,000 depositors. The first duty will be a complete overhauling of these institutions. The great bulk of them are, no doubt, thoroughly sound. The next duty will be to establish a complete system of audit, and lastly, they must see that this system is really kept going. There is no doubt that the difficulty all through has been that a system of audit has not been strictly adhered to, and so laxity of management has crept in. The fnnctions of the Committee will be in the nature almost of a Board of Directors to these great institutions. There is one point in which I cannot agree, and as to which, at the proper time, I propose to move an Amendment. We ought, I think, to appoint the Committee straight out, for it is rather a round-about method to appoint one Committee with the duty of appointing another. The hon. Member for Sunderland, whom I do not now see in his place, has given notice of an Amendment to the effect that no Amendment of the Savings Bank Act will be satisfactory which does not provide for a compulsory comparison of every pass-book with the ledger, and increase the maximum amount allowed to be deposited annually. I hope we shall not make this alteration, for, candidly, I think the State has gone far enough in relation to these banks. Hon. Members, I think, hardly realise the enormous responsibility of the State in connection with these Savings Banks. The State allows every individual in the country — man, woman, or child—to deposit a sum of money with the State security—guaranteed by the State—and returnable at par at any moment to the maximum amount of £200, and, therefore, if this privilege were availed of by every individual in a population of 40,000,000 then the Chancellor of the Exchequer might have to take charge of a sum of £8,000,000,000 sterling. I do not think that amount will ever be reached, but the way the amount held is increasing year by year under the growth of habits of thrift among the people, shows that certainly the time has come when we should say to persons who want to save more than £200 that they must avail themselves of the means of purchasing Consols, or the other means open through the Post Office and elsewhere of investing their money. A man who wants to deposit more than £200 may be fairly asked to take the risks of the ups and downs of Consols rather than to increase his deposits, for which the State is responsible. Another point the hon. Member raises is the compulsory presentation of pass-books for inspection. I think the hon. Member when he makes that suggestion can hardly have practical knowledge of the working of these banks. I do not believe there is any bank where the sending in of pass-books can be insisted upon. A system by which pass-books are examined as they come in at any hour or any day is quite effectual, and, perhaps, more effectual than any other; and it may be one of the duties of the Inspecting Committee to carry this out. I hope the Bill will be read a second time this evening, and that a good Committee will be secured. The Committee will certainly have no sinecure office. There will be no honour or glory, but plenty of hard work, in the auditing of 1,500,000 of accounts amounting to £45,000,000 of money, and they will find themselves in hot water pretty frequently in the discharge of their duty. I hope that the Committee will be carefully selected, and that their labours may prevent the possibility of those grave catastrophes happening which have in the past so seriously scandalised the poorer classes of society. To encourage and protect habits of thrift among the poor is without doubt one of the most important things the State has to do, and we must be very careful to give security to the beginning of this habit. The first steps are the most difficult, and if there is then any idea of want of security the consequences are so serious that I am sure the State may well go out of its way to provide absolute security for the small savings of the community.

*(6.15.) MR. LENG (Dundee): I concur in the hope that the Bill will now be read a second time. I have had occasion to make representations to the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the interest of certain Scotch Banks, and I desire to acknowledge the very conciliatory attitude taken by the right hon. Gentleman. He has made large concessions on consideration of the views placed before him, and the Bill in its present form is much amended as compared with the shape in which we had it before us last year. Several of the regulations which were then of a cast-iron character have been made considerably more elastic, and are now very much more likely to meet the requirements of the poorer class of depositors, and those who desire to make investments. I regret, however, that the limit of deposits within the year has not been increased from £30 to £50. I know there is a difficulty in making this alteration in Trustee Savings Banks so long as the limit of £30 is maintained in the Post Office Banks, but at the same time it seems to me that, as compared with the period when £30 was fixed as the limit, the ability of the working classes now to save money has increased very considerably, and the amount of possible yearly savings would now be more nearly represented by £50 than by £30. In the case of Scotch banks these deposit accounts are used in a more operative manner than is the case usually in England. Not only do depositors continue to add small sums during the course of the year, but they take out sums more frequently to meet payments of rent and other periodical engagements; but under the peculiar clause in the older Act they are limited to putting in £30, and cannot occasionally take out £5 or £10, so as to leave a total increase of £30. It is, I think, very desirable that this defect should be remedied. Still the Bill shows a great improvement in its form to that it had before. No sound Savings Bank will object to a thoroughly systematic audit, and the proposal in this direction contained in the Bill has for years been carried out in the bank with the management of which I am connected; there the audit is systematically carried out by one of the first accountants of the city. Only in the case of weak or improperly conducted banks can any objection be taken; but by every soundly conducted bank I am sure the regulation will be welcomed. I cannot concur with the hon. Member (Mr. Bartley) in the desire that these banks should develop into what I suppose would be called Joint Stock Banks. The reason that such large sums have been deposited in these banks in our large towns is that from the beginning they have been conducted by sound business men, actuated by benevolent and philanthropic motives, and desiring to encourage that national thrift of which we have heard so much in a recent Debate; and the fact that eminent citizens have given so much of their time—several nights in the week often—to superintending the operations, has given a degree of confidence to the working classes, which, it is to be hoped, will continue. I hope that the conciliatory spirit which the right hon. Gentleman has shown hitherto will be maintained in future discussions, and that comparatively minor matters which we may desire to have improved will have his favourable consideration.

*(6.20.) MR. E. BRODIE HOARE (Hampstead): The Bill is very much in accordance with the recommendations of the Committee, and I only wish to refer to one important omission. A clause which did not come under the cognizance

of the Committee, because the subject had not been raised to the prominence it now occupies. I think everybody will admit there is no class in the country which is considered worthy of so little sympathy as the bankers. On the one hand they have been represented as a sort of vampire, sitting in a strong room stuffed with gold, and fattening on the unearned increment; while on the other hand, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has represented them as having no gold and being a distinct danger to the community. But the Chancellor of the Exchequer is himself the largest banker in the country, and he, under one head alone—the Trustee Savings Banks — holds deposits of £44,000,000. But when we come to examine his proposals, his assets, liabilities, and securities, we find in the first place that he is insolvent. But that does not very much matter, for he can appeal to the shareholders and obtain the £500,000 by which he is insolvent. When we come to look at the amount of his reserves, we find he has not a single light half sovereign. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has on this account £70,000 in the Bank of England waiting investment, and therefore, we may suppose the right hon. Gentleman thinks it right to hold £44,000,000 of other people's money, and the moment there is a demand for it, and the moment there is a run upon the banks and they come to him for assistance he must realise his securities. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has sent me an authoritative copy of his memorable speech at Leeds, and having in mind what he there said, I hope he will, in Committee, introduce a clause — the right hon. Gentleman will not object to it as far as he is himself concerned—to bind his successors, in whom we may not have the same reliance, to keep an adequate reserve against such a very large liability.

(6.25.) MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I am glad we have got to the point when we are able to say a few words upon the Second Reading of this Bill, and I am exceedingly glad that my hon. Friend the Member for Sunderland (Mr. Storey) is not present to delay the Second Reading. For nearly five years we have been trying to get something done for the Trustee Savings Banks, and I support the present Bill, not because I believe it is exactly the Bill we ought to have, and I hope we shall be able to amend it in Committee, but, under the circumstances, it is as much as we could expect considering the opposition which has been brought to bear. In regard to the point raised by the hon. Member for North Islington (Mr. Bartley) I do not think we need at all fear that the Chancellor of the Exchequer will ever have £8,000,000,000 at command in the savings banks. The idea that every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom should have in the banks an amount the total of which would reach that sum is to me a very pleasant prospect, but it is not likely to be realised. What I want to see is the savings banks in the country established by Act of Parliament for a specific purpose—a safe means of deposit for the people. I think I have a little more experience in regard to these matters than the hon. Member for North Islington, and I cannot pretend to say that the majority of these banks are in perfectly sound and solvent condition. My investigations have been a little closer than those of most hon. Members, and my conclusion is founded on facts which might have been brought before the Select Committee, as the hon. Member knows, had not certain circumstances prevented the evidence being brought forward. However, whatever may be the position of many of the banks, if this Bill can, and in a great degree I believe it will, create greater safety in the future, I am content so far as the present is concerned. I hope that some Amendments may be agreed to, so as to ensure more thoroughly and completely the enforcement of the provisions of the Act of 1863. If that Act had been really carried out by trustees and managers, we should not now be in the position we are to-day with regard to the Trustee Banks throughout the country. The hon. Member (Mr. Leng) has spoken of the Dundee Savings Bank; but I am sorry to say that all the banks throughout the kingdom are not conducted on the same principle as the Dundee Bank is conducted, nor indeed are the majority of the savings banks in England conducted so well as is the smallest and humblest of the Trustee Banks in Scotland. In Scotland, so far as investigations have gone, the Trustee Savings Banks are carried on according to the spirit and letter of the law, with the result that in that country there have been no defalcations, and the depositors are not defrauded of their money. In this country, on the contrary, we have had a great number of very disastrous defalcations. Had it not been for the fact that a great many depositors in banks have died, and no applications have been made for the money standing in their names, the losses in some cases would have been enormously greater than any brought to light before the Select Committee. In one instance alone—an instance only partially investigated upstairs—in one bank in London the amount of money that thus fell into the hands of the Trustees in the course of a few years was £20,000, and this enabled them to tide over their difficulties. There would have been a thorough overhauling of these savings banks under the Act of 1887 had it not been that by the action of the House of Lords derelictions of duty were in that Act made criminal offences. But for this we might have been able to have investigated many circumstances which might have prevented losses. However, it is in the hope and belief that this Bill will do something to make deposits more safe in the future, that I support the proposals of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I hope it may be possible to introduce in Committee some small Amendments which the Government may be able to accept with a view to induce managers and trustees to carry out the law in reality, so that depositors may be no longer defrauded. I wish the Government could see its way to increase the maximum amount of the deposits. The hon. Member for North Islington does not want that, because, as he says, people can buy Consols. But they do not understand Consols, and if they did they might not, perhaps, buy them. I should like to see the sum of £30 per annum increased to £50, and the maximum yearly amount from £200 to £400. It is, however, not for us to do anything that might wreck this Bill, and if the Government cannot see their way to increasing the maximum I will support the measure, as far as it goes, in the hope that these savings banks, as aids to thrift, will become more flourishing than ever throughout the country.

*(6.32.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): Having been Chairman of the Committee to which this subject was referred two years ago, I wish to express a general approval of the details of the Bill. It affords an illustration of the fact that the delay of a year in the consideration of the Bill is not always thrown away, and I am glad to see that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has availed himself of the opportunity to remove points of difficulty which have occurred. As to the Committee of Inspection, however, I am rather disposed to agree with the hon. Member for Islington that the method proposed is a roundabout process. Almost everything will depend on the constitution of the Committee. If it is to consist of nominees of the Government, then the Government will be practically responsible for the savings in the Trustee Banks. Two years ago the Select Committee unanimously came to the conclusion that the Audit Board should not be a Government Board, and that the Government should not undertake an audit for the savings banks. I hope that some other means will be devised of selecting the persons who are to form the Committee of Inspection. In regard to the general subject of Trustee Savings Banks, I must again point out that, if the regulations laid down by the Act with regard to Trustee Savings Banks are properly carried out, there can be no doubt that security will be afforded to the depositors. Those regulations, however, have not in some cases been properly carried out, especially in the case of audit. Many of the banks, of course, carry out a system of continuous audit, which makes them perfectly safe, but undoubtedly a small section of the smaller banks do not strictly carry out the regulations with regard to audit, and the result is that the depositors are placed in considerable danger. The scheme of the Bill is to supply this deficiency.

(6.38.) MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I wish to express in one sentence the interest taken by my own constituents in this measure, and to say that it is regarded by them as being a very useful and valuable Bill. I would, however, call attention to the date of November 20th, 1890, mentioned in the 10th section, and suggest that it should be altered to 1891, in order to give time for the savings banks to come within the operation of the Act.

(6.39.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I am gratified to see that there is a general consensus of opinion in the House in favour of the Bill, and I thank hon. Members for the reasonable criticism which has been offered. When the Bill gets into Committee it will be my anxious wish to meet any reasonable Amendments as far as I can. I agree with my right hon. Friend opposite that the audit must not be one instituted by the Government, and that the Committee of Inspection must not be nominated by the Government. Its constitution will be a question to be dealt with in Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

(6.40.) Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be committed to the Standing Committee on Law, &c.—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

*(6.41.) MR. BARTLEY: I think the Bill would be got through in less time in Committee of the Whole House.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I think also it would be more convenient if the Bill could be discussed in Committee of the Whole House.

MR. GOSCHEN: I think it would be better to refer the Bill to the Standing Committee, on account of the danger that there may not be sufficient time found for its discussion in the House. My experience last year was a rather unhappy one in this respect, and I should prefer to have the Bill referred to the Standing Committee, so that we might make progress with the Bill while other business was going on.

(6.42.) MR. HOWELL: I think the right hon. Gentleman will be well advised to take it in Committee of the Whole House. Otherwise I am afraid we shall have to move Amendments at a later stage, which will raise the whole of the questions involved in the Bill. If the Bill goes to a Standing Committee and discussions occur upon it in this House in addition, we shall run a great risk of losing the Bill altogether. As one desirous of seeing the Bill passed into law, I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to agree to the measure being dealt with by a Committee of the Whole House.

MR. GOSCHEN: I suggest that we should, in the ordinary way, refer the Bill to a Committee of the Whole House, and see how we get on. If it be found impossible to find time for it, or if the proceedings be delayed, the Bill might then be referred to the Standing Committee, if hon. Members assent to the adoption of such a course.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: If the right hon. Gentleman waits until the Amendments are on the Paper he will be able to form a judgment as to whether the Bill is likely to occupy much time or not.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House for Thursday.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN BILL [LORDS]

(No. 216.)

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. Attorney General.*)

*MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R. Holmfirth): I do not think this Bill ought to be allowed to pass without some explanation.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I can only speak with the permission of the House. The hon. Gentleman was not present when I made a statement with regard to the Bill, when it came up on a previous occasion. This is a Bill to enable children to be taken out of the custody of parents who are not treating them properly. Judging from the representations received from all parts of the House, there appears to be a unanimous feeling that the Bill should be passed into law as soon as possible.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

ASSESSMENT OF TAXES (REGULATION OF REMUNERATION) BILL.—(No. 221.)

Considered in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

ELECTORAL DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 182.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause stand part of the Bill."

MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to move, Sir, that you report Progress, and ask leave to sit again. I had no idea the Bill would come on this afternoon. I am indebted to the Attorney General for his courtesy the other day in suggesting we should arrange when the Bill should be taken. If the hon. and learned Gentleman had given me any intimation he wished to take it this afternoon, I might have been able to come to some arrangement with him. I hope he will defer the Committee till to-morrow.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare*).

SIR R. WEBSTER: I think the hon. and learned Gentleman is under a mistake. He asked me if it was important the Bill should come on, and I told him I must take it whenever I could. I hope he will not press his Motion.

MR. CONYBEARE: I had no idea the Bill was likely to come on, and under the circumstances I cannot withdraw my Motion.

THE CHAIRMAN: It would be more convenient if the hon. and learned Gentleman withdrew his Motion and allowed Clause 1, which is purely formal, to be passed.

MR. CONYBEARE: I have no objection to that course; my Amendment does not apply to Clause 1.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday.

ARMY ANNUAL BILL.—(No. 240.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

New Clause.

(Marine Officers may sit on Courts Martial on Marines afloat).

The provisions of the Army Act, enabling Marine Officers to sit on Courts Martial on Marines ashore, shall in future be extended to Courts Martial on Marines afloat.—(*Sir John Pope Hennessy.*)

—brought up, and read first time.

Question proposed, "That the Clause be read a second time."

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire Horncastle): I have been in communication with the hon. Member (Sir John Pope Hennessy) with regard to the Amendment he has proposed, and I have explained to him it is not possible for the Amendment to be inserted in the Army Annual Bill: it ought to be proposed on the Naval Discipline Bill. I have given the hon. Member for North Kilkenny an undertaking that when my noble Friend the First Lord of the Admiralty brings in the Naval Discipline Bill he will consider favourably the proposal of the hon. Member.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I also have been in communication with the hon. Member for Kilkenny. He explained to me what the Secretary of State for War has now said, but he did not at all agree that the proposition of the right hon. Gentleman was satisfactory. We would be willing to allow the Bill to be taken now provided the right hon. Gentleman will agree to either bring in a short Bill himself, giving effect to the proposal, or say that the Government will support a Bill brought in by a private Member.

MR. E. STANHOPE: It is impossible for me to give that undertaking considering the state of public business. I will communicate with my noble Friend and see if he is willing to undertake that task.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I think in that case the Bill had better not be proceeded with, especially as it is already passed ten minutes to 7.

Question put, and negatived.

Bill reported without Amendment, to be read the third time to-morrow.

PUBLIC BODIES (PROVISIONAL ORDERS) BILL.—(No. 233.)

Considered in Committee and reported; as amended, to be considered to-morrow.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, " An Act to amend the Law relating to certain officers in India." [East India Officers Bill [Lords.]

That they have agreed to, Tithe Rent Charge Recovery Bill, with Amendments.

TITHE RENT CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 207.)

Lords Amendments 207 be considered upon Thursday, and to be printed. [Bill 251].

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection: That they had discharged Mr. Burt from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufacture; and had appointed in substitution: Mr. William M'Arthur.

The House suspended its Sitting at Seven of the clock.

The House resumed its Sitting at Nine of the clock.

MOTION.

BETTING AND GAMBLING.

RESOLUTION.

*(9.0.) **MR. PICKERSGILL**: I rise to move—

> "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the growing prevalence of Betting and Gambling; to ascertain to what extent the Statutes dealing therewith are evaded; to consider whether any, and what Amendments should be made in such Statutes; and to Report their opinion thereon to the House."

I do not think I need occupy much time in discussing the evils against which this Resolution is directed, because they are recognised and sufficiently obvious. The existence of gambling hells in the West End of London is notorious. The statement was recently made in the *Echo* newspaper that within a one-mile radius of Liverpool Street, City, there are 18 such establishments. Mr. Montagu Williams, the Police Magistrate, is responsible for the statement that within the district of his Court there are upwards of 60 betting and gaming houses; and, moreover, throughout the Kingdom, in every country town, there have sprung up within recent years betting clubs which imitate Tattersalls. I do not think, therefore, I need trouble the House with further illustrations, but I should like to quote one authority, because when I state it is the authority of a man who has had a life-long connection with the turf, it will not be thought he is prejudiced either against horse racing itself or, I presume, against betting upon horse racing. The gentleman to whom I refer is the well-known Mr. William Day, who, in the *Contemporary Magazine*, for June, 1890, quoted and endorsed the following words:—

> "The extent to which the evil of betting is carried on in the large and important towns of A."—the names are not given—" with 50,000 inhabitants, and B., containing over 76,000, is

almost incredible, and is doing terrible injury not only to the men but to the women and children of those places, who, if they cannot obtain the wherewithal to indulge in this evil by honest means only too often resort to means which are dishonest."

I can understand the position that the instinct of betting and gambling is ingrained in our countrymen, and that it is useless to take any action against a universal instinct; but I do not sympathise with it because I believe that if the opportunity and facilities for laying out money in betting are decreased, the desire to bet will not be so insatiable as some people profess to believe it is. But whatever may be said in favour of that position, it is not a position which has been taken up by the Legislature of this country; nor do these arguments lie appropriately in the mouths of the Executive Government, because the Executive Government are active enough with reference to these questions in some directions. Only a little time ago half a dozen bargemen on the Thames were arrested and carried off to prison for gambling for pennies on a boat on the river. Their work for the day was done, and they were beguiling away their leisure hours in a manner not essentially different from the way in which their betters — sometimes, at all events — amuse themselves. Justice was rigorously dealt out to those men, but they and their class ask why they should be punished whilst, for example, the fashionable baccarat players are allowed to continue on their course with impunity? Again, scarcely a week passes without a raid on some betting club in the East End of London. People at the East End want to know why the same measure is not dealt out to the clubs at the West End of London. Thirdly, the police are constantly interfering with bazaar lotteries or Christmas goose clubs. They are, no doubt, infractions of the law. I do not object to this action on the part of the Executive Government, but I ask for a fair and an equal law, and for an impartial administration of that law. I should like to point out that, historically, it is not true that the Executive cannot put down gambling, and I think that lotteries are a very significant illustration of that truth. Years ago, as every one knows, lotteries were as prevalent and as mischievous in this country as betting is now. For many generations the Government were very half-hearted in their dealings with lotteries; they actually patronised State lotteries while they endeavoured to put down other kinds of lotteries or "little goes," as they were called. This unequal dealing with a great mischief was practically inoperative, but at last the Government put down State lotteries. From that time—1826—the lottery mischief has practically ceased to exist. My subject naturally divides itself into two parts, the question of gaming or gambling and the question of betting. According to English law gaming may be unlawful, either by reason of the place where the gaming is carried on, or by reason of the unlawfulness of the game itself. As regards the first reason, the law mainly depends on a Statute passed as far back as the reign of Henry VIII.; as regards the second reason, it depends upon a series of Statutes which were passed in the reign of George II. The Statute of Henry VIII. has commonly been regarded as aimed exclusively at the encouragement of sports which were calculated to promote the defence of the people; but I should like to point out that the Preamble of that Statute alleges as mischiefs aimed at not only the decay of archery, but the impoverishment of the people. I think, therefore, we may regard that Statute as a Statute against gambling in the ordinary sense of the term; and although the Statute is no doubt an ancient one, and may perhaps so far be supposed to have lost a great part of its authority, I should like to point out that that objection is met by the fact that the Statute is practically embodied in the Gaming Act passed during the present reign. What, then, does the Act of Henry VIII. prohibit? Put shortly, it prohibits the playing of certain games in a common gaming house. But what is a common gaming house? It is clear from the reasonings and arguments of Sir Henry Hawkins in the Park Club case, that a *bonâ fide* members' club, or even a private house, may be a common gaming house within the Statute; and there is in an old authority a passage which strongly, as I think, supports that contention. I refer to a passage in Dalton's *Justice of the Peace*, which runs as follows:—

> "It was resolved in 3 James I. that if the guests in any inn or tavern call for a pair of dice or tables, or for their recreation play with them, or if any neighbours play at bowls for their recreations, or the like, these are not within the Statute of 33 Henry VIII., c. 9."

It would seem, then, that playing for mere recreation is the test of innocence, and that if a few neighbours even meet and play in such a way and to such an extent as cannot fairly be regarded as playing for recreation's sake, then *ipso facto*, the place where they play, becomes a common gaming house. Secondly, what are the games prohibited by the Statute of Henry VIII? Certain games are named. I need not say a word about them, because, so far as they are concerned, the Statute may be regarded as repealed by subsequent legislation. But after the enumeration of particular games comes a general prohibition in the following terms:—"Any new unlawful game hereafter to be invented." The Park Club case decided that baccarat is an unlawful game within the meaning of the Statute. In the next place, I desire to say a word or two about the Statutes of King George II., which I think are of extreme importance with reference to the legality or illegality of baccarat. I pointed out just now that the games which are within the Statute of Henry VIII. are not absolutely prohibited, they are only prohibited under certain circumstances, that is when they are played in common gaming houses; but the games which come within the Statutes of George II. are absolutely prohibited whenever, wherever, and however they may be played. Those games comprised certain games well known to our ancestors, such as basset, hazard, and roley-poley. But I call special attention to the general prohibition in the 13th George II., chap. 19, which is in these words—

> "Every other game invented or to be invented, with one or more die or dice, or with any other instrument, engine, or device, in the nature of dice, having one or more figures or numbers thereon."

I think it will be conceded at once that baccarat comes within the mischief of this Statute of George II., and I submit also it falls within the express words of general prohibition. It is quite true that dice are not employed in the game of baccarat. Cards are used, but cards are used, as I submit, to perform the function of dice. The cards are not used as they are ordinarily used. The court cards are ignored altogether in baccarat. The object of the game is merely to make up particular numbers, and drawing a card at baccarat is an act essentially of the same nature as casting a die. Therefore, I submit that the card at baccarat is "an instrument, engine, or device in the nature of dice," and falls within the Statute of 13th George II., chap. 19. I should like to point out one construction which the Courts have put on the judgment of the Queen's Bench Division in the Park Club case. Since that case was decided an action was brought in the Bloomsbury County Court to recover money lent for the purpose of playing at baccarat, and Judge Bacon, in that case, entered judgment for the defendant, on the express ground that baccarat is an unlawful game. According to the *Solicitor's Journal*, of the 20th of October, 1889, Mr. Poland has given an opinion that it is illegal to allow baccarat to be habitually played in *bonâ fide* members' clubs. If that is so, why has not the opinion of so eminent a criminal lawyer been acted upon? Not long ago, at the trial of an action in the Mayor's Court, it was sworn that baccarat was played nearly every night at the Brabant Club, Philpott Lane. Why was not the Brabant Club prosecuted? It is true that in one case the police did proceed against a duly constituted members' club—the Cranbourne—and convictions were obtained against all the members of the club on the ground that they were joint owners of the premises, and were, therefore, liable under the Statute. But the Cranbourne Club was only a very humble affair, and was mainly frequented by foreigners. I want to know why the poorer classes are alone interfered with, while the so-called better classes are allowed to go scathless? To prosecute for an offence of this kind only one portion of the community, and that the poorer class, is not only ineffective but is positively mischievous, with regard to the object we have in view, because it inevitably arouses public sympathy on behalf of those who have broken the law. I ask, therefore, not only for a just law but for its impartial administration. As to the second, and perhaps the more important portion of my subject—the prevalence of betting—the evil is almost intolerable in extent. I do not desire for one moment to suggest that we ought to make the making of a bet a criminal offence. That would be, if not absurd, at all events ineffective, because it would be far out-running public opinion. I desire not to deal with the public who are led to make bets, but to make the law stringent, so as to confine within narrow limits, and if possible to suppress, the operations of bookmakers and betting commission agents. It is singular to see the extent to which the law protects the betting commission agent and gives him a distinctly legal status. The Bishop of London stated recently that he once saw the name of one of these persons on a Church Building Committee, and when he remonstrated he was told that he was discrediting the members of a recognised and useful profession. Whether it is useful or not can scarcely be a matter of question; but it is certainly recognised by the existing law. I cannot understand why gentlemen interested in racing, and even in wagering, should have any tender feelings towards bookmakers, the majority of whom are, not to mince matters, simply swindling the public. Speaking of them Mr. William Day said:—"It is impossible to obtain a fair price about any horse you may wish to back." The recent movement in France against the *pari-mutuel* has attracted much public attention, but the *pari-mutuel* itself was a protest against the unfair odds which the bookmakers exact. This machine of the *pari-mutuel*, by which the public are able to make their own odds, and to dispense with the bookmakers altogether, is not unknown in England. It was tried upwards of 20 years ago on the Wolverhampton racecourse. A prosecution followed, and after an elaborate judgment by Mr. Justice Cockburn, the machine was decided to be an instrument of gaming within the Vagrant Act of George IV. I should like briefly, in the next place, to review the legislation of the present reign with regard to betting-houses and places. The Betting Houses Act of 1853 made it criminal to advertise a betting house; and Anderson's Act in 1874 was, I believe, designed by the Legislature to suppress all advertisements which offered information for the purpose of making bets. The Courts have, however, put upon the latter Act a much narrower construction. In 1883 a sporting prophet, under the name of "Centaur," advertised in the *Licensed Victuallers' Gazette* his "wire finals" to be sent direct from the race-course for 2s. 6d. each. He was convicted by a Metropolitan Police Magistrate under Anderson's Act, but the Court of Queen's Bench decided that the Act did not apply to offering information as to bets that were not made in a house or place kept for the purpose of betting. In "another place" a Bill has been bought in by Lord Herschell, the object of which I understand to be to make criminal the sending to minors of such advertisements as those referred to in the case of "Centaur." I cordially approve of that Bill so far as it goes, and think that its scope might be widened, so as to include all advertising tipsters, without in any way prejudicing the legitimate interests of racing in this country. I mean those tipsters who pretend for a consideration varying in degree from a shilling to a sovereign to send, in anticipation, the names of winners and who do a great deal of mischief in promoting betting and affording facilities for it. And now let me say a few words upon the question, what illegal betting is. Betting carried on at an office or place under certain circumstances is illegal, and the question is, what place, and under what circumstances? Now, first with regard to illegal betting, the word "place" has received very wide construction, and includes a stool, stand, or umbrella, and Mr Justice Hawkins, in "The Queen *v.* Cooke," laid it down that the ordinary operation of bookmakers in an enclosure is illegal, irrespective of their doing business under an umbrella or a stool; in spite of this, at Epsom, Ascot, Goodwood, and elsewhere, these things go on not only under the eyes of the police, but under their protection. I submit that the stewards, as proprietors or occupiers of the enclosure, are responsible, and until these gentlemen are placed in a criminal dock, I contend that to put down the humbler votaries of pitch-and-toss is a scandal on the administration of the law. It may be said that the law only applies to ready-money betting. That is not so; but, even if it were, in every enclosure ready-money betting goes on. But, further, I submit that the prior deposit of a stake is not essential to the illegality of a bet; though the Preamble of the Betting Act refers to ready-money betting, the enacting part of it prohibits also "betting with persons resorting thereto." According to the suggestion of Mr. Justice Blackburn, and as laid down by the author of a little book on the subject, Mr. Stutfield—a work which has received the commendation of the Queen's Bench, it is illegal to bet indiscriminately against all comers. As regards the policy of the law, it may well be doubted whether ready-money betting is not less mischievous than betting on credit, by which persons may be led into liabilities they never will be able to meet. I now proceed to establish my point that the law throws its *ægis* at present around the betting commission agent. In the first place, the ordinary betting commission agent, who does his business at an ordinary betting club, may advertise in the public papers or by circular for clients; secondly—and what is probably of more importance—if I authorise a commission agent to make a bet for me, that authority becomes irrevocable on the making of that bet by the agent, and the agent can recover from me the amount of that bet in a Court of Law. That is the decision in the case "Read *v.* Anderson," a decision upon which lawyers of standing have raised doubts whether it is good law; but, unfortunately, it has never been appealed to a higher Court, and so we are governed by that decision. What is the effect of that? A commission agent makes a bet with a bookmaker—he may and, I believe, often does make it with himself—but suppose a commission agent receives a commission to make a bet, and makes it with a bookmaker: it is true that the commission agent is not under any legal obligation to pay the bookmaker; but if he does not he is turned out of his profession, and loses his livelihood. Then the commission agent, having paid the bookmaker, can come into a Court of Law and claim to recover the money from his principal who authorised him to make the bet, which is therefore enforceable, though it is said to be void. I may give an illustration of the mischief of the law as declared in "Read *v.* Anderson," which was quoted by the Archbishop of Canterbury. A young clerk committed suicide after having been found to be fraudulent in regard to cheques to the amount of £2,000. After his death accounts were found which had been furnished to him by a commission agent and made out in the most systematic manner, and letters from the agent were also found showing that occasionally small sums were remitted to him as winnings, but more frequently he was asked for cheques for large amounts to make good losses. My point is this, the demand for cheques to make good losses was a perfectly legal demand, enforcible by law according to the decision to which I have referred. The commission agent may not receive the money in advance, but having made the bet and paid it, the law permits him to recover it from his unfortunate victim. I contend that the state of the law is scandalous, and ought to receive the immediate attention of the Legislature, so that not only should the bet be non-enforcible, but that every transaction arising out of the original bet should be tainted by it, and no contract under it should be enforcible. That appears to me one important respect in which the law ought to be amended. Before I sit down let me say a few words upon betting clubs and their position in the eyes of the law. The ideal Tattersall's is, I suppose, a select club where gentlemen of wealth and position meet and make wagers on horse races for "mere recreation," as the old law writers say, and the stakes are lost or won with complete indifference. That is the ideal Tattersall's, but what is the real Tattersall's? It is composed mainly of professional commission agents and bookmakers, who entrap the foolish and inexperienced, many of their clients being dishonest and embezzling clerks, and servants. An enormous number of betting clubs have grown up in imitation of Tattersall's, which, I presume, must stand or fall with it. Whether these institutions fall within the Betting Act or not has never been decided; but Sir A. Cockburn, when Attorney General, suggested that the test was "holding a bag against all comers." Is not that the position of all bookmakers at Tattersall's? There is much in the Statute Law on betting and gambling which requires amendment from a technical point of view, in order to facilitate prosecutions, but I have confined my remarks to the more public aspects of the question. I submit that I have shown the present state of the law to be unsatisfactory, and that there is a *primâ facie* case for the inquiry I ask. The Resolution is almost identical in terms with one which was carried in this House 57 years ago. Since then the forms of gambling have undergone considerable modification, and I hope the House will grant the Committee for which I ask, in order that a practice which admittedly has given rise to an enormous brood of evils throughout the country may be adequately investigated, and that, if necessary, suitable modifications may be made in the law. I beg to move the Resolution which stands in my name.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the growing prevalence of Betting and Gambling; to ascertain to what extent the Statutes dealing therewith are evaded; to consider whether any, and what, Amendments should be made in those Statutes; and to Report their opinion thereupon to the House."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

*(9.50.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): In seconding the Motion, I need not go into the technical and legal aspect of the question, because my hon. Friend has dealt with that thoroughly, and as I am not qualified to do. Only this I say, in relation to the legal doubts and judicial decisions, that if the law is not strong enough it is the duty of Parliament and the Government to make it effectual for carrying out the object desired. Within the last few months the country has been shocked by scandal in relation to gambling in the higher grades of society, and I have ventured to put several questions to the Home Secretary in regard to baccarat playing. I cannot say that I got much satisfaction from the answers of the right hon. Gentleman, I cannot say that I gained much information, but this I did learn that baccarat is an unlawful game; but it appears that the unlawful game may be played in your own house. In clubs it has practically been held to be unlawful; and the authorities have taken proceedings against the Adelphi and other clubs. I am told that in regard to the Adelphi Club the players, under some old Act of Parliament, might have been prosecuted had the case gone on; but it was not thought necessary to go on with that part of the case. But so far as I can understand if the game is unlawful in clubs it should be unlawful anywhere. Of course I am quite aware that, do what we like, we cannot put down gambling or any other vice by Act of Parliament; but we may do something, and other vices have been restricted by legislation. I noticed in reading the other day that this House has put down gambling within the precincts of the House. In the journals of the House I find it recorded that on November 8th, 1768, the House passed the Resolution—

Ordered, "That the Messengers in waiting do take care there is no gaming or other disorders in Westminster Hall or other passages during the sitting of Parliament."

Whether it was against Members or against the outside public this order was at that time directed I do not know, but we do know there is no gambling in Westminster Hall or other approaches to the House now, and, therefore, the Resolution has been successful so far as it was directed. So we may well suppose the action of the House might be effectual in other cases. Duelling and cock-fighting have disappeared. With an earnest application of the law against all offenders, no matter whom, we probably should not have much difficulty. There is no doubt with regard to my question the other day had this baccarat playing taken place at a club, and if persons of not such a high social standing been concerned, we should have had some action taken by the authorities. As I understand it, the game of baccarat is unlawful, the spirit of the law is broken by it, the clear intention of the law being to put an end to gambling by games of chance. If there is any doubt about baccarat being unlawful within the meaning of the Act, let a case be tried. I do not expect a Tory Government to be quite so strict in these matters as a Radical Government might be, but still a Tory Government should try and prevent the spirit of the law being systematically broken. It appears to me that the higher the social standing of the people engaged in playing this unlawful game the more is it the duty of the Government to take every means to put it down. That the vice of gambling is spreading and causing ruin among the younger part of our population there is too much reason to believe. I am told that a recent prosecution of a club was undertaken at the instigation of a lady who wished to save her son from the temptation of gambling. I am told, on good authority, that an immense amount of gambling goes on in clubs at the West End of London on Sunday evenings, that this is well known, and that the police might, if they chose, easily find it out. I really think the Government might allow this Resolution to pass, and a Committee to be appointed, that an inqpiry would do no harm, and possibly it might be very useful in collecting facts upon which an Amendment of the law might be based.

*(10.0.) MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I think the House is much indebted to the hon. Member for Bethnal Green for the very clear and luminous manner in which he has set forth the state of the law on this subject. I think the inconsistency and futility of the laws we have hitherto passed in this House on the subject of gambling must have come home to the mind of every Member of the House. No one will deny that the evil against which the Motion is directed is one which has enormously increased of late years. It must be within the experience of every Member that some one or other within the range of his acquaintance has been utterly ruined through gambling habits. Homes at one time happy have been reduced to misery by this vice. Many such cases are known to me. This vice has spread through every class of society. Gambling used at one time to be regarded as the vice of a section of the upper classes. I am sorry to say that it still continues to be a vice of that section, but it has filtrated through all classes of society down to the lowest, and it is indulged in by old and young, down to mere errand boys. It is difficult to say who are the greatest sufferers from this vice, so widespread are its consequences. It is notorious that in the industrial districts of the Midlands and North of England the cases are common in which clerks and artisans have lost their situations, and have been reduced from competence to poverty. Many of them are unable to pay their debts, and frequent embezzlements arise in consequence of losses through betting, the result being in numerous cases the loss of situation and character. Nearly as many are ruined by this vice as by intemperance. It seems to me that the evil has become so serious that it demands the attention of Parliament—and in this connection I must say how sorry I am to-night to see such a small gathering of Members to deal with one of the greatest evils which affect our country at the present moment. If the House will allow me, I will, as a specimen, read an extract from a letter received from a working man in Scotland on this subject—for the vice has spread to Scotland, and is nearly as great an evil there as it is in the North of England. This writer puts the matter so forcibly that I think the House will bear with me whilst I read a short extract. He writes—

> "You will allow me to call your attention to the case of poor hard working men who try to bring up their sons to be useful citizens, and after all to become the victims of the bookmaker, which leads to a dissipated life. In Scotland betting is increasing to an alarming extent. The bookmaker takes from 1s. upwards, and very often collects in shops privately, such as publicans, barbers, tobacconists, &c., and then the gentleman bookmaker makes his call in due time before the race, and when the bettor

is successful the money gained is drunk until they make themselves actually no better than beasts for several days, or as long as the money lasts."

This describes the case of tens of thousands of people in our country. It is a deplorable state of things. The bookmakers are ubiquitous. They are to be found in every grade of society, and in every part of the country—even in our villages. I am told that in a great number of cases they are the local publicans and tobacconists; and I understand that the gains they make are enormous. I am informed that as much as £500,000 passes through the hands of some bookmakers in a year, and the average daily bets placed by one are said to amount to £5,000. Some bookmakers have accumulated large fortunes, and live in the suburbs of London in magnificence. I say this is an utterly rotten state of things, and that these men are following an illegal calling. If the law were properly administered, these men would not be allowed to exist. They are simply pests and ulcers on our social system, and ought to be stamped out. Of late years there has been a great increase of betting clubs, some of which have been successfully prosecuted in Liverpool and London; but it is inconsistent to prosecute humble clubs while leaving Tattersall's untouched. I would desire to emphasise the moral degradation that is brought upon all who are connected or identified with the betting practices of the turf. There is nothing which more thoroughly degrades men, which so robs them of all higher and nobler sentiments, and which makes them more dead to the higher calls of life. I believe it is a rare thing for a confirmed gambler ever to get cured, and that the vice often ends in suicide. And here I would make a quotation from Mr. Greville's *Memoirs.*

> "In the 'Papers' of the late Mr. Greville you will find him making the following humbling confession in his journal, with reference to his attendance at the Races on Epsom Downs :—'This demoralising drudgery reduces me to the level of all that is most disreputable and despicable, for my thoughts are eternally absorbed by it. Jockeys, trainers, and blacklegs are my companions, and I cannot leave it off, though I am disgusted with the occupation all the time.'"

Mr. S. Smith

A London newspaper thus describes a scene at Epsom—

> "Looking round upon the gathering on the ground, one could not help speculating on what might not be the moral effect on England if Epsom Eowns had yawned open and swallowed up that betting, swearing, brutal-looking, brazen-throated throng. There they came, streaming up through the clover fields, gay with buttercups and clumps of yellow furze, in hideous din and uproar, as though there were no larks carolling overhead, nor musical tremor of breeze in the woodlands, and nothing delightful in the hazy sunny landscape around. There was a general atmosphere of blackguardism and vulgarity; and a positive relief it was to get out of the thick of it into the quiet green lanes again."

The question before us is how to deal with this pestilence which is sweeping over our country like a plague. It is all very well to make raids upon betting clubs, but that is only tinkering with the evil. Something more radical is required—something more in the "root and branch" style. The cause of the spread of betting is the portentous increase and circulation of the sporting papers, of which in London there are 15 registered and several not registered, some of them claiming a circulation of 90,000 a day. These papers contain columns of impudent lies under the name of sporting tips. An equally potent cause of the spread of this vice is the space devoted to betting by the ordinary Press, which carries this information and the temptation to bet into all our homes, and spreads it before the eyes of our children. I certainly do not envy the mental calibre of the people who feed on the rubbish served up to them in the sporting papers. Such foolish and vapid nonsense as the prophecies and articles contained in these newspapers it is difficult to conceive that any intelligent human being can read with pleasure. But even the ordinary press is not much better. I glanced at some of the daily papers this morning, and found that they contained on an average from two to three columns of this stuff. All these papers contain the impudent lies of tipsters. Surely the editors of the newspapers must feel degraded at putting into their journals statements from tipsters which are nearly always discredited by the facts, but which lure thousands of dupes to their ruin. I have obtained the opinion of a chief constable of one of the largest cities of England as to the cause of the great increase of gambling which has taken place during the past few years, and this is what he says—and I commend it to the attention of the House, for no one is more fitted to express an opinion—

> "The principal cause of the increase of betting is the facilities and means afforded by the daily Press. Every day contains the Sporting Intelligence, and under that head is all the information as to the odds where they may be obtained, the various 'tips,' &c., which inflame the imagination and prove a terrible temptation to youths to speculate, and then, having lost, to obtain somehow the money which has to be paid."

This is the cause of the increase of gambling, and I say it is needless for us to do anything unless we go to the root of the mischief. It is useless for us to declare lotteries illegal, and it is grossly inconsistent to prosecute old women as fortune-tellers if we tolerate these impudent tipsters. We allow fortune-telling to go on in these sporting papers to a gigantic extent; and I say that we should either cease to meddle with these matters at all, or proceed on logical grounds that approve themselves to common sense and are likely to attain the result aimed at. Some people will say, "If you interfere with sporting intelligence you will be striking a blow at the liberty of the Press," but I deny that. Such liberty was never contemplated. The liberty to do wrong, even if done within the letter of the law, is more honoured in the breach than the observance. The conductors of many reputable papers would gladly rid their columns of betting news, but they are forced by competition to give them. One paper, the *Leeds Mercury*, ought to be mentioned with honour, because for years it has maintained its powerful position while excluding betting news from its columns. I say, therefore, that if we are to accomplish anything let us go to the root of the matter and declare not only betting illegal, but the publication of betting intelligence. It is said, however, that there is gambling on the Stock Exchange and in the commercial markets. Well, every one must admit that there is a great deal of illegitimate and reckless speculation in this country, and if you can invent a law to put a stop to that, by all means do so. But I see great difficulties in the way of legislation of this kind, the difficulty of drawing the line between what is legitimate and what is illegitimate business being almost unsurmountable. But the fact that we are powerless to repress all forms of speculation is no argument for leaving untouched this most fruitful of all forms of demoralisation. No possible defence can be put forward in favour of betting on horse racing or other sports. In conclusion, I would turn for a moment to the moral aspect of the question as contra-distinguished from the legal, and would urge that what is wanted is a change in public opinion on the subject of betting, and a higher standard adopted among those whose duty it is, from the great positions they hold, to set a good example to their less favoured fellow-countrymen. I think very serious consequences may result in the future if those in high places do not realise that their duty is to set a good example to others. I am sure it is in the minds of many people throughout this country that some of the oldest institutions of our land—institutions which are deeply rooted in the affections of the people—may be severely shaken in the future if more deference is not paid to the moral sense of the community. There are many persons who are naturally conservative in character, and who would not like to see any violent change in the historical institutions of this country; but who, nevertheless, are gradually being brought to feel that under possible circumstances great changes may be forced on the public by the character and behaviour of those who are highly placed in the country. In this matter of setting a bad example by staking immense sums of money on games of hazard and horse racing, it is most important that this House should send forth a clear and decided expression of opinion; and I believe that much good would result to the future of this country if the House would speak out with no uncertain voice in favour of putting an end to that unbridled spirit of betting and gambling which of late has raged like a pestilence in this country.

(10.22.) MR. M. J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I am satisfied that the speech to which we have just listened reflects in great measure a large body of opinion outside this House, and though that opinion may not seem to be shared by the great majority of Members of this House, judging from the small attendance to-night, there are many present who are determined to use their utmost efforts to check, and, if possible, to exterminate this evil. Gaming and betting are matters with regard to which the House of Commons should speak with no uncertain voice, as the country will look to our views on such subjects for guidance. We should, at all events, satisfy our constituents that this matter is not wholly disregarded. Though it is not easy to keep a House on such a night as this, I am glad to see there are a certain number of men who are ready to stand up and speak their minds on the subject. I suppose most hon. Members have been on a racecourse. I am bound to say that of recent years I have not been near one, and the reason is that some of my great friends—men I was at college with, and men with whom I have since been associated—have not only lost their all, but have ruined their families through their gambling propensities, as displayed on the racecourse. The destruction and woe and misery which have been entailed on different noble families through this cause are so appalling that I should shrink from stating individual cases. We know that the racecourse does not necessarily entail gambling and betting. Horse-racing is one of the noblest pastimes if properly conducted, and it encourages the breeding of good horses. When, however, that sport is demoralised and lowered, as it so frequently is in these days, it is time to resist the pressure placed upon us to induce us to attend race-meetings, and to warn others, especially the young, from going near them. If gambling and betting were put down on the racecourse it would be better for our sons and our friends, and for all who attend race-meetings. This is a very important matter, and I have no doubt it is one upon which my right hon. Friend the Member for Thanet (Mr. J. Lowther) could bring his great influence to bear. I do not think the appointment of a Select Committee would do any good. Its sittings would occupy a long time, and I do not think we should get any legislation in the present Parliament. I do not think Parliament could be expected to put down sporting papers, as proposed by the hon. Member opposite. We know that such papers, especially in the North, are sold in large numbers, on account of the information they contain. We could not go to the proprietors of newspapers and say they must no longer publish them. We must endeavour to improve the tone of those about us, and to deter the young from entering upon the paths of folly. If we can do that we shall be very much better without Acts of Parliament. My assertion is that the law is strong enough at present, and that it is already far beyond public opinion, so that there is neally no use in bringing in Bills and passing new Acts of Parliament. I hope the present legislation will be put in force, and that we shall have much better supervision exercised by the authorities over places where betting and gambling are carried on. The poor man's club and the rich man's club should all be under an equal law, and that law should be impartially administered. I hope this Debate will do some good in showing that this House is interested in the question, and is desirous of seeing the law strictly enforced.

*(10.30.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): The House must be indebted to the hon. Member for the clear statement he has made in introducing this subject. There is nothing to be said for the vice of gambling, but as it grows up under many different aspects, the opportunities of reaching it by means of the law are extremely limited. Do

hon. Members who have referred only to peculiar forms of gambling associated with cards, dice, and betting, not hear from time to time of "corners" in iron, salt, and copper, and of transactions on the Stock Exchange, which are as dangerous, as pernicious, and as nefarious as any that take place in the paddocks or the clubs? I think that in expressing their indignation against gambling as a vice which has no redeeming feature, hon. Members ought not to omit forms of gambling which work equal misery, ruin, and disaster on those who engage in them with those which have been made the special subject of attack to-night. A Select Committee has been asked for, but if a Select Committee were to be appointed its range would be infinite, and hon. Members would not readily see the end of its labours. In all transactions in life we desire that no man should take advantage of another, or avail himself of superior judgment or knowledge in order to make a profit out of his neighbour. The basis of the Civil Law is that no man should make any bargain with another in which he has any improper advantage, and when he contracts he should disclose all that he knows. But this is the very opposite of our law, and the doctrine of *caveat emptor* requires a man to look after himself. Take the case of bargains for cargoes to arrive at a certain time. What are these transactions but another form of betting, because the possibility of arrival or non-arrival of a certain number of cargoes is made a reason for the arbitrary fluctuations of price, in the course of which great fortunes are made or widespread ruin caused. The Debate, however, has been confined to the forms of gambling known as cards and betting on horse races. I do not wish to defend those forms of gambling; indeed, I readily recognise their evils. I think that the hon. Member for Bethnal Green found fault, as far as card-playing was concerned, both with the law and the manner in which it was administered and put in force. I confess that I love the sweet simplicity of the Common Law. I like the rule which says that no game was unlawful, and that a wager was a perfectly legitimate form of human ingenuity, but which says also that if a man gathered people together in what was called a gaming-house for purposes of profit, this is a common nuisance, which the law should strike down. Time after time the Legislature has made enactments against forms of gaming. In Henry VIII., c. 9, 1541-2, it was provided that—

> "No manner of artificer or craftsman of any handicraft or occupation, husbandman, apprentice, labourer, servant at husbandry, journeyman or servant of artificer, mariner, fisherman, waterman, or any serving man shall from the said Feast of St. John Baptist play at the table, tennis, dice, cards, bowls, clashe, coytinge, logatinge, or any other unlawful game out of Christmas under pain of 20s., to be forfeit for every time, and in Christmas to play at any of the said games in their masters' houses or in their masters' presence; and also that no manner of person shall at any time play at any bowle or bowles in open place out of his garden or orchard under the pain for every time so offending to forfeit 6s. 8d."

In the time of George II. faro, ace of hearts, basset, and hazard were picked out as being unlawful; and I think that these statutory attempts at suppression have been failures. They were an unwise extension of the broad plain principles of the Common Law, which does not attempt to deal with any form of game as being unlawful in itself, but which deals only with the social evil of gathering persons together for the purpose of profit. If, for example, a Select Committee were to recommend that baccarat should be put down, I believe that such advice would be bad, and that this form of gaming would revive in some other form subsequently. The hon. Member says it is wrong to allow the clubs of the rich to escape, while those of the poor are punished. I agree with the hon. Member. But was not the Park Club a club of rich and influential men in the West End of London, and was it not successfully prosecuted? I and the Metropolitan Police have spent many months in endeavouring to get at another club, whose name I will not mention, but which, I believe, has been carrying on gambling to an extent that is ruinous to all concerned. But our efforts have been baffled, because we cannot get persons to come forward and swear to facts which are necessary before the police can take steps to enter the club. I ask hon. Members not to believe that there is any remissness to put the law in force. When the authorities do not always seem to be as active as some hon. Members wish them to be, it is because there are difficulties in their path owing to the sympathy of the general public with the offenders. There are, perhaps, other causes why it is sometimes extremely difficult to enforce the law. We all know many charitable and good people. I do not suppose that the hon. Member for Flintshire (Mr. S. Smith) has ever ventured to touch such a thing as a charitable lottery with the tip of his finger. But there are such things; and no one could live on the other side of St. George's Channel, or have any remote connection with that country, without being the recipient of bundles of tickets for lotteries and raffles designed to relieve some charity. The law strikes at these things; but those who have to enforce the law shrink from doing so against lotteries. I have always written in the terms of the severest remonstrance I can command; but I have not gone further. The hon. Member for Flintshire says that the increase of gambling is due to the sporting newspaper. I believe that the hon. Member is right. I believe it is because there has sprung up of late years a mass of penny and halfpenny newspapers filled with nothing but trumpery predictions and inflated descriptions of horse racing that young men, who might be better employed attending to their ledgers, are induced to read and sometimes to follow the advice given. Has the hon. Member for Flintshire the courage to start on a crusade against these newspapers?

*MR. S. SMITH: Yes, certainly.

*MR. MATTHEWS: Then I ask this House whether it is prepared to embark on such a crusade as will strike at the root and cause of this racecourse gambling. For my own part, I am not prepared to assent to the statement that gambling has, on the whole, increased. I am afraid, however, that it has descended to a somewhat lower sphere of society, and has assumed a different form. In my younger days pitch and toss was very common, but I believe it has now ceased to have charms. There was also a great deal of public-house gambling which I can remember in my younger days. [*Loud laughter.*] I speak of what I saw as a philanthropic observer. I agree, however, that gambling has assumed another form. In no form has the spirit of gambling been more mischievous than on the Stock Exchange and in the mart, and I hope the House will not be led away by such shadowy distinctions as satisfy the minds of some hon. Members opposite. It is impossible to define bookmakers in a Statute in such a way as to enforce against them penalties of which the public judgment would approve, and that is an essential of legislation. How are you to distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate bookmaker? If any one of us makes one, two, or three bets against a horse, is he a bookmaker? When does the intolerable and unpardonable sin of betting begin; and when does legitimate business end, and illegitimate begin? If you do not carry the public mind with you, if you do not carry the common sense of the House with you, I defy you to pass legislation against gambling and horse-racing which would hold water for a moment. We would have the hon. Members for Flintshire and for Bethnal Green crying out for something more severe, and for more action on the part of the police. I think the charge against the police is one which comes with very ill grace, especially from the Legislature. There is no duty on the police to enforce penalties. We have no Public Prosecutor—I am speaking broadly — except in capital offences. And I protest it being made a matter of reproach against the police that they do not prosecute, whenever a *primâ facie* case against the betting laws can be made out. The hon. Member for Bethnal Green is just as much a custodian of the public morals as is a policeman. If the hon. Member chooses to consider Tattersall's an illegal establishment let him prosecute. For my part, I should be sorry dogmatise on that subject. I should be sorry to assert that Tattersall's is within the meaning of the Act with any positiveness of affirmation. I am inclined to be of opinion that it is not, and I would not on my own responsibility direct a prosecution against Tattersall's. If the Member for Bethnal Green thinks otherwise, it is his duty to bring forward that matter himself in the Criminal Courts. I emphatically disclaim, for my own part, anything like the duty of doing so.

*MR. PICKERSGILL: I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that it is not the duty of the police to prosecute a club. May I point out that scarcely a week passes without the police prosecuting some club in the East End of London?

*MR. MATTHEWS: I have asserted that everybody has a right to prosecute, and therefore the police do so when the necessary evidence is procurable. But when the hon. Member chooses to assume that betting at Tattersall's is unlawful, and that the police deserve censure because they do not prosecute that establishment, I assert that such a charge cannot be justly sustained. The police do not possess evidence to show that the transactions there are illegal, and they would be exceeding their proper functions if they prosecuted. With regard to the betting commission agents, I confess that I have no sympathy with them. Theirs is rather a dirty and a shabby trade. But I cannot help pointing out to the hon. Member that it would be extremely difficult to frame a law which would strike at them, and which would not also strike at other agents who take commissions. It is to be observed that a commission agent derives no profit himself whether a bet is won or lost. He carries out the instructions he receives, and he must back or lay according to the wish of his employer. I am bound to say that much as I dislike betting, and the commission agent's relation to it, yet I do not see how you are to frame an Act to strike at them which would not also strike equally at the Stock Exchange jobber or the commission agent in the Cotton Market. Therefore, Sir, while I sympathise in the main with the feelings expressed by the Mover and Seconder of this Motion, I ask the House to consider what practical good could be expected to follow from the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate to what extent the Statutes are evaded. I do not think the Statutes are evaded. Many cases of gambling do not fall within them. For instance, if baccarat, roulette, or any other game is played in a private house that certainly is not an offence against the Gaming Laws, and it would be most absurd if the House were to pass a law enabling the agents of the law and the police to enter private houses to see whether a man is playing at baccarat for a penny or a farthing with his children or his grandchildren. Such an investigation of the amusements of every private family would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the country would not bear it for a moment. Any attempt at an enactment of that sort would be the height of legislative folly.

*MR. MORTON: I do not wish to interfere with such play as that referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, but with such play as we have heard of as taking place at Tranby Croft.

*MR. MATTHEWS: I must humbly and respectfully ask the hon. Member where is the scheme by which it can be ascertained what kind of baccarat is played, and how is he to ascertain that baccarat of any sort, or of either sort, is played in any house unless the house is to be entered and searched? Will he say that every house, from 10 in the evening, is to be liable to be searched? Will he picture to himself the consequence if every house is to be liable to be entered and searched by the police to see whether baccarat is played or not?

*MR. MORTON: May I remind the right hon. Gentleman that there is sworn evidence that baccarat was played at Tranby Croft?

*MR. MATTHEWS: I am not aware of any sworn evidence.

*MR. MORTON: That is to come.

*MR. MATTHEWS: I am always willing to submit to interruptions, but not to a running fire of them. I would again ask how possibly, if a thing of that sort is to be turned into an offence against the law, how can it be suppressed or put down by the police except by domiciliary visits? The information is not to be got. If the hon. Member were himself taking part in the game, I am quite sure he would not voluntarily go and tell the police. We do not have domestic spies and traitors in our social life, and the only possible means by which the thing can be ascertained will be that the police should have the power of entry and search. That would be simply intolerable. There are some defects which are due to the state of the law, and some due obviously to the defects of its machinery. The House does not want a Select Committee to advise it on the subject. I have here in my box a Bill which I prepared three years ago to consolidate and amend the law relating to gaming; but I have been prevented from bringing it in, partly because I had not the time, partly because I did not think it was pressing. I want no Select Committee to point out what are the requisite amendments in the law. I do not see that the law fails to reach very serious abuses of gambling, either in card playing or betting. It seems to me to reach all the real evil of that class of misdemeanour, and the reason why the law is not more efficient to prevent those practices is because of the great difficulty, the absolute impossibility, of proof. No legislation could overcome that difficulty. And so, although I repeat that this discussion may have done good by showing what the opinion of this House is about such pursuits, I strongly deprecate the appointment of a Select Committee, as the inquiry would end in no commensurate benefit.

(11.7.) The House divided:—Ayes 47; Noes 70.—(Div. List, No. 90.)

FOREIGN ENGAGEMENTS.

(11.14.) MR. HOWARD VINCENT Sheffield, Central): I am sensible that this is a matter of some delicacy to invite a Parliamentary discussion upon, namely, the Treaties of Commerce with foreign Powers; but I shall be very careful to say nothing offensive to any foreign nation, and, therefore, this objection will not apply to my remarks. The notice which stands in my name is as follows:—

> "To call attention to the provision in the Treaty of Commerce concluded with Belgium in 1862, and with the Zollverein in 1865, in restraint of preferential importation by British Colonies of goods of British origin; and to move, That, in the opinion of this House, Foreign engagements which hinder the full development of trade within the Empire should be terminated as soon as practicable."

I must point out that in 1888 I moved for and obtained a Return of the Treaties of Commerce in affairs between the United Kingdom and foreign nations, which precluded preferential fiscal treatment of British goods in the Colonies and Dependencies of the British Crown. This Return showed that two such Treaties were in force. A Memorandum was issued at the time which showed that there were the following Treaties between this country and foreign Powers which expressly precluded preferential fiscal treatment. There was a Treaty of Commerce concluded with Belgium in 1862, which contains a stipulation that articles of produce and manufactures of Belgium shall not be subject in the British Colonies to other or higher duties than those imposed upon similar goods of British origin. This Treaty was terminable by 12 months' notice on either side. There was also the Treaty with the Zollverein of a similar nature, and containing similar provisions that articles manufactured there shall not be subject in the British Colonies and foreign possessions of Her Majesty to any higher or different duty than—

Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members not being present,

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Eleven o'clock till To-morrow.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Wednesday, 18th March, 1891.

Mr. Speaker was in his place soon after 12, but a quorum was not made until 12.25, after Mr. Caldwell (Glasgow, St. Rollox) had called attention to the fact that there were not 40 Members present.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON WATER COMMISSION BILL.

(12.27.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That Mr. Thomas Henry Bolton, Sir Algernon Borthwick, Mr. Bristowe, Mr. Lawson, and Mr. Murdoch, be Members of the Committee, and four Members to be added by the Committee of Selection."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

Question proposed, "That Mr. T. H. Bolton be a Member of the Committee."

*Sir J. LUBBOCK (London University): These names appear now for the first time on the Paper, and we have had no time for considering them. I am very far from saying that any one of these Members are not well qualified to serve on a Committee of this kind; but it does not necessarily follow that they would compose a Committee that would be altogether satisfactory. Of course, my hon. Friend the Member for North St. Pancras (Mr. Lawson) will most ably represent the views of the London County Council on the subject; but I regret that we have had no opportunity of consulting our Colleagues as to the composition of a Committee in which the London County Council are so much interested.

*The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): My right hon. Friend must understand that the names which appear on the Paper do not complete the Committee. The Members proposed to serve on it have been selected after consultation between both sides of the House, and I think that the interests of London will be adequately represented. Four Members will be added by the Committee of Selection.

Question put, and agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.

Mr. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): May I ask if it is still intended to take the Lords' Amendments to the Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill to-morrow, seeing that they have not been circulated to-day?

*The FIRST LORD of the TREASURY (Mr. W. H. Smith, Strand, Westminster): The arrangements originally announced will stand good, and will, I think, be the most convenient arrangement for all persons concerned. There will be a special delivery of the Lords' Amendments to-day, and I understand that they will be accessible at 2 o'clock.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time to-morrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (WALES) BILL.—(No. 1.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

*(12.35.) Mr. W. BOWEN ROWLANDS (Cardiganshire): I rise, Sir, to move that this Bill, which is to enable the owners and occupiers of Wales to have effectual control over the liquor traffic, be now read a second time. No one I suppose will care to deny that excessive indulgence in strong drink is an evil of gigantic proportions. The testimony of those best qualified to judge is unanimous. Medical men, men of the world, statesmen, philanthropists, Judges, and ministers of religion, are here agreed. The vice of intemperance stains our fair fame as a nation. It thwarts our remedial measures at home and brings discredit upon our best efforts abroad. Only a week or two ago Mr. Justice Hawkins, in some observations he made at the Reading Assizes, asserted that 80 out of every 100 prisoners brought up for trial assigned their fall to drink. It was stated in this House in April last, by the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, that it is difficult to over-estimate the evils which arise from the consumption of alcoholic drinks; and one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Georgia

in charging the grand jury, said that he found three-fourths of the violations of the law occurred in those parts of the country where whisky could be freely obtained, while there were very few in those districts where the sale of drink was restricted. No apology can, therefore, be necessary to the House or to the country for introducing any measure which makes an honest attempt to grapple with so great an evil. There have been in the past and may yet be in time to come valuable efforts made to stem the tide of misery which is caused by drink. In the Debate on the licensing question in this House last year the President of the Local Government Board told us that, in his opinion, the desire to see drunkenness reduced may be greatly assisted by legislation. This is a most valuable pronouncement from a responsible statesman. It is often said that legislative attempts to make men better are futile or worse than futile, because they are really a waste of time, and do not succeed in securing the result their promoters have at heart. It is considered a sort of axiom that you cannot make men sober by Act of Parliament; but, personally, I should like to see further efforts made in that direction before we proclaim, in advance, their failure in mournfully-prophetic tones. The fact that we cannot make men personally clean or personally pure by legislation was not allowed to stand in the way of sanitary or social reform, and by analogy the Legislature is qualified to effect the purpose which the promoters of temperance have in view. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington (Lord R. Churchill) while acknowledging the difficulties of the case pointed out the possibility of giving people, by legislative enactment, the power of making themselves sober. In that view I express my entire concurrence. It cannot, I think, be denied that one great cause of drunkenness is the number of temptations by which persons are assailed. Public houses are being constantly increased in number, or their capacity enlarged. The President of the Local Government Board admitted categorically last year to the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth (Sir W. Lawson) that the existence of an excessive number of public houses tends to promote drunkenness. "Unquestionably," he said, "we say that the excessive number of public houses promotes drunkenness." A Report in the hands of Members of this House, dealing with the temperance measures which have been adopted in Sweden, and especially a pamphlet issued by Herr Rubenstein, the chief of the Stockholm Police, tells us most emphatically that the amount of drunkenness which exists in a town depends, to a great degree, upon the number of public houses. In 1849 Lord Harrowby, presiding over a Committee empowered to consider the question, stated that the multiplication of public houses for the consumption of intoxicating liquors was an exceptional evil of the first magnitude, and he went on to connect this increase with the increase of crime as cause and effect. In 1872 the then Home Secretary—Mr. Bruce, now Lord Aberdare—expressed a strong opinion that far more licenses existed than were required, and he attributed much of the mischief caused by drunkenness to the existing facilities for the purchase of intoxicating liquor. The right hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Chamberlain) has more than once used language to the same effect; and the noble Lord the Member for Paddington says that Parliament and the State, by allowing such a condition of things to exist, force upon the people the consumption of alcoholic liquor, which "without such pressure would not be consumed." And he adds—

> "The fatal facility of recourse to the public house makes it extremely difficult for multitudes of persons, in view of the hardship of their lives, to resist or avoid intemperance."

I do not know that a graver indictment could be preferred against the Legislature of any nation. If a tithe of this be true there can be no doubt that Parliament and the State have aided and assisted the growth of this vice; and what I now ask is that Parliament should remove the reproach which has been urged against it not by direct and immediate legislation, but by giving the people themselves the means of checking the evil and protecting themselves if they are so disposed. That the number of public houses should have the effect attributed to them is only in conformity with the general laws of temptation. "The sight of means to do ill deeds does oft make ill deeds done." There can be no doubt that the gaudy splendours of the gin palace present to the poor and struggling visions of inconceivable and dazzling beauty which wean them from the duties they should do, from the scenes they should frequent, and from the society they should love. They take from them the very means by which they might provide for themselves and for their families by offering temptations almost irresistible to persons circumstanced as they are. There is no question of political partisanship at stake, but my proposal is one which must commend itself to all who take an interest in the welfare of the people and desire to alleviate the ills under which human nature is suffering. Various efforts have been made to cope with the difficulty by the reform of the licensing system and by other means; various Committees have sat and reported, but people seem to have come to the same conclusion in regard to the licensing laws that Cromwell did in regard to the laws of England—that they are an ungodly and tortuous jumble, susceptible of nothing but very drastic alteration instead of piecemeal or gradual reform. The present Bill provides that under certain circumstances the inhabitants shall have the power of escaping from this evil by their own motion. Mr. Bruce's Bill of 1872 was another attempt. The noble Lord the Member for Paddington spoke of this, and said that the licensing system then was no system at all. The whole trade united against it. It did not arouse sufficient enthusiasm in temperance circles to command warm support, and so it was withdrawn. Our proposed legislation need not prevent the consideration of such reform. If by it the traffic can be so reduced as to be rendered harmless there is no reason to dread our methods. But if, after every experiment, it still remains a curse, we give the people a means of escape. Where our proposals are not enforced there must be licensing management, and the better this is the better for the country. Light wines have been brought into consumption with a view of mitigating the evil, but this merely added another class of intoxicants, and failed to produce any salutary effect. Grocers' licences were introduced with the most benevolent intentions, and it was hoped that the system would work well. The practical result, however, has been, that it has led to secret drinking and to evasions and shifts, especially on the part of women. Indeed, it has become such an evil that I should be glad to see these licences done away with altogether. An approach to Free Trade was attempted. This also failed. The system of high licences was advocated by some, and was favoured by the trade as a welcome alternative; but that would enable rich brewers to buy up licences—they could afford to pay the price. Houses would be enlarged if the number was lessened, and so there would be a sensible diminution of the temptation. The next measure was the most extraordinary and hopeless of all; the restraint of adulteration. No less distinguished a man than Erasmus complained of it in his day, and tells us that "the water which they mix with it is the least part of the mischief." It is, of course, wrong to sell an article which is not what the seller represents it to be; but as far as evil to the consumer is concerned, it would be hard to put in it anything worse than the alcohol itself. But all these schemes have failed. In our view it is the drink which does the harm, and more or less accidental regulations of the traffic in regard to adulteration, and other circumstances, lessen the evil to so inconsiderable an extent as to render it desirable that some other measure should be resorted to. The principle of the Bill of which I move the Second Reading to-day is no new one. It was affirmed by a majority of 26 in this House in 1880; by 43 in 1881 and by 87 in 1883, when the hon. Baronet the Member for Cockermouth moved a Resolution placing the control of the liquor traffic in the hands of the inhabitants themselves. On that occasion the hon. Baronet had a majority of Welsh votes of 10 to 1 in favour of his Resolution. As a matter of fact, only two Welsh Members voted against it, and I should be very much surprised to find a single Welsh vote against this Bill to-day. Upon that occasion the hon. Baronet the Member for Devon (Sir J. Kennaway) proposed as an Amendment that instead of placing the licensing question in the hands of a body, elected by the popular vote, provision should be made for extending the powers of the Licensing Magistrates, and that proposal was rejected after full consideration and a long and earnest Debate. Even as late as last year leave to bring in a Licensing Law Amendment Bill was given to the noble Lord the Member for Paddington, and the noble Lord included in his Bill a provision that in certain circumstances a majority of the inhabitants should have control over the licensing of public houses within their districts. Therefore, the noble Lord affirmed the principle of the present Bill, and I have full authority for the assertion that on both sides of the House the principle is regarded as the proper and legitimate method of dealing with the evil. Unhappily, the evil is not decreasing. The *Lancet* of the 19th of February last has this statement—

> "It is appalling to find that the drink bill of 1890 amounts to £139,495,470—an increase, all medical science and common sense notwithstanding. It is not our business to moralise on this expenditure. To us it means so much cirrhosis, Bright's disease, gout, rheumatism, insanity, &c., disabling employment, taking the pleasure out of the life of families, and bread out of the mouths of children."

If the paper called *Breweries and Distilleries* is right, material prosperity fails to diminish the evil. This paper, on the 14th of February, informs us that much as people may shake their heads, one proof of the returning prosperity of the working classes is to be found in the fact that there is a general rush to the gin bottle. Let us then give the working classes an opportunity of stemming this rush, and give the majority of the people who desire to live under conditions, which in their belief will conduce to the preservation of good order and morality an opportunity of carrying their wishes, into effect without being restrained by the will of a small minority. Not only did the noble Lord the Member for Paddington assert the principle of this Bill, but he defended it by argument. He said—

> "On the face of it, it is not unfair that when you find a large and preponderating majority in a restricted area, who desire to live under conditions which in their belief conduce to order and morality, it is hard on such a majority that a comparatively small minority should be able to prevent their having their way; and what makes it especially hard in this case is that the power is a power which under the law of the land is actually enjoyed by the owners of property."

Mr. W. Bowen Rowlands

He added that he did not consider the direct veto essential to a reform; but as the Temperance Body attach much importance to it, they, from their long labours in the cause, had a right to

> "Some concession in this matter at least as a subject of experiment."

He pleads for some measure of compensation under certain circumstances. But on this question of compensation the country has already spoken out in trumpet tones. We desire to give the bulk of the people the power which landlords now have and exercise with the approval of all good men. I will quote one instance from the *Alliance News* of 22nd August, 1890, where I find the following passage:—

> "The Prince of Wales has again been solicited to allow the erection of a public house on his estate, and he has again refused."

On this point I may also cite an opinion given by a man of vast property in this country—the Duke of Westminster—who in February of this year, at a meeting reported in the *Times* newspaper of February 10, 1891, of the local branch of the Church of England Temperance Society, said he believed that ground landlords had a good deal in their power to help the cause of temperance in an indirect way. As an illustration, he mentioned that in cases where leases had fallen in he had been able to abolish 37 out of 48 licensed houses. Then he goes on to hope that Sunday closing will soon be the law in England. The paper called *Breweries and Distilleries* comments upon our proposed legislation, and says that the real object of the writer—alluding to some paragraph in a paper—was to confer on this unhappy country of ours a new form of local self-government under the name of direct popular veto, to be presented to the House of Commons on the 18th instant. Then it goes on to argue that the use and enjoyment of alcoholic liquor is just as much necessary, as a staple article of diet, as bread, or beef; and that not even a fanatic would dream of prohibiting the latter. Sir, the common sense of mankind refutes entirely such an argument, and declines to entertain the view, that because the majority of the population veto public houses in a particular locality, therefore they should have the power to veto butcher's and baker's shops. It is idle to put to us such absurdities. I have never heard that evils flow from the consumption of bread and butter, save perhaps where it had been too dear. I have never known in the whole of my experience that crime could be attributed from eating a quantity of roast beef. In no police court of this country has a man ever been brought up for kicking his wife, and the plea being put in, that he had been led to the commission of the assault from having eaten too much bread and butter. This publication goes on to say that those who vote for this measure will be marked men — I hope that a great many of us will be marked men—and that at the next election that the trade will vote solidly—may it be said liquidly—against this proposal, or at any rate will withhold their countenance and support from those who are in favour of it. The sooner, they say, it is understood that who are not on our side are avowed enemies, the better it will be for all parties. I agree that if we have the matter fought out on that issue, there will not be longer any doubt either as to the vote which will be given in this House, or in the country. This Bill desires only to deal with these special circumstances affecting one portion of the Kingdom. The Bill refers to Wales alone, and if it be fitting, as the noble Lord the Member for Paddington put it, that an experiment should be tried, no place could prove so satisfactory for that purpose as Wales, where the great majority of the inhabitants ardently desire that such an experiment should be made. The interest which that part of the country takes in the temperance question is abundantly clear. There are a few figures with which I may, perhaps, trouble the House. On each ratepayer in various counties of Wales a paper was left, asking him whether he would give the ratepayers the power of deciding, by direct veto, the number of licences to be granted within his district; or, secondly, whether he was in favour of the prohibition of all licences for the sale of intoxicating liquors to the inhabitants. In the County of Anglesea there were 89 per cent. for the first question and 3 per cent. against, while there were 7·5 per cent. on the other side. In the County of Carnarvon there were nearly 10,000 "Yes," and 500 "No," and 400 "Neutral." Of the total of 10,000 householders 90·7 per. cent. were in favour of the first question and 5 per cent. against, while 4·1 per cent. were neutral. In Merionethshire, 6,674 "Yes," 223 "No," 310 "Neutral." Of the total of 8,000 in this county, which is the only one which was anything like exhaustively canvassed, there were 92·6 per cent. who said "Yes," 3 per cent. "No," and 4·3 per cent. "Neutral." In Derby the total was nearly 5,000, and 84 per cent. said "Yes" and 9 per cent "No," while 5 were "Neutral." In Flintshire the same proportions practically were maintained. The same results follow, with slightly lessened numbers, with regard to total prohibition, but in Merioneth the figures are 83 per cent. "Yes," 9·7 per cent. "No," and 6·6 per cent. "Neutral." These figures are accessible to any opponents of ours who desire to verify them. We know from experience that if it were possible to bring to bear upon the people a counter influence, that influence would have been exercised; no one dared to attempt a canvass in the opposite sense; and we are entitled to assume, therefore, that these figures show that the vast majority of the inhabitants of Wales desire earnestly that this Bill should pass into law, and should become operative throughout the Principality. In bringing this Bill before the House, I, and those associated with me, have no object in view except to make an honest attempt to deal with what is confessed by all to be an evil. We desire to achieve no Party success in any shape or form; we cordially welcome the assistance of hon. Members on the other side of the House, as well as that of those who sit on this side; and no Party motive, direct or indirect, can be attributed to us in promoting a measure which will have a beneficial effect upon the people of Wales. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby said, in one of the Debates of this House, that the great majority of the Liberal Party were pledged to vesting the control of the liquor traffic in the public. I appeal, then, to them to vindicate their utterances. I appeal, on behalf of my county, that this experiment be tried within her borders. I appeal to the

Liberal Unionists, who cannot very well refuse to listen to the voice of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, whom I have quoted already. I appeal also to that Party which numbers many doughty champions of temperance in its ranks, and which has among its chief ornaments the noble Lord the Member for Paddington. I desire to make my appeal to both sides of the House and to Members of every shade of political profession; to every man who loves his country or his fellow-men; who desires that Great Britain should wipe away the stain of intemperance from her escutcheon, should rid herself of this stain which paralyses her energies and confounds her wisdom, to all who long that homes should be happy and that hearts should be glad, who wish to promote the welfare of their fellows, and who desire that righteousness shall exalt our nation both at home and abroad, to support the Second Reading of this Bill, and, Sir, I believe that this appeal will not have been made in vain.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. W. Bowen Rowlands.*)

*(1.20.) THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN (Lambeth, Brixton): In rising to move the Amendment which stands in my name, that this Bill be read a second time upon this day six months, I claim that indulgence which the House is always ready to accord to every Member who addresses it for the first time. I daresay I shall be told that I am one of the advocates and apologists for intemperance. I care very little for imputations which I know to be unfounded, and I am just as much opposed to intemperance as the Permissive Bill gentlemen themslves. These are not my own words, Mr. Speaker, but the words of a very great authority on the licensing question — a member, I believe, of the United Kingdom Alliance, namely, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. I have quoted them in order to carry the conviction to hon. Members opposite, as any words coming from such a source must necessarily do, that I am not the advocate and apologist for intemperance. The hon. Member who introduced this Bill has told us that this is in no way

a Party question. I wish I could agree with him in thinking so; but my own personal experience has taught me that it is in some measure, at least, made use of as a Party question. I think it is a great pity that this should be the case, and that it would be much better if we could all agree to sink our Party differences and unite in doing what we can to diminish the evils attendant on drunkenness. But as I have said this is a question which is frequently made one of Party, and I will give the House an illustration of the way in which it is done. When I first had the honour to stand for the seat I now occupy; in fact, on the day after I had been chosen as a candidate, and before my views on the question of local option had been made known, a Liberal placard was issued to the constituency, headed "Great Temperance Demonstration," followed up by references to the Liberal candidate, and finishing with words to this effect—

> "Temperance men of Brixton, come in your thousands to protest against this attempt to foist a young Tory lordling gin-distiller on the constituency."

Within 18 months of that date a by-election arose in the adjoining constituency, and the Temperance Body were called upon to listen to an address from that high priest of temperance, the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir W. Lawson), who was to aid the Liberal Party in doing their best to foist on a neighbouring constituency the hon. Member for Kennington, who I think I am correct in saying, is at least ten times more intimately connected with the liquor traffic than I have ever been, against a teetotaler of 20 years' standing. And here I wish it to be understood that I have not a word to say against that hon. Gentleman on account of his connection with that traffic, because I know that his business is always honourably conducted; but, at the same time, I do think it a little hard upon me that a protest of the kind I have quoted should have come from the opposite side of the House, and that then our opponents should tell us that this is not a Party question. The chief part of the speech of the hon. Member who has introduced this Bill has been devoted to decrying the evils of drunkenness in this country. I am quite sure that with that portion of the hon. Member's address all Parties in this House will cordially agree. But it struck me that the hon. Member contrived to skate very lightly over the more stringent provisions of his Bill; and here I will ask the House to consider what it is that this Bill proposes to do. In the first place, it provides that if a majority consisting of two-thirds of those who vote upon the question so wish it, it shall be in their power absolutely and completely to shut up every public house in their district, thus taking it out of the power of every man who is not fortunate enough to have a cellar of his own to obtain any alcoholic liquor whatsoever, however much he may need it. This is bad enough; but the second provision is even more stringent, because under it, should this Bill be passed, a bare majority of the voters will be enabled to reduce the number of public houses to such an extent that, as far as I can see, there is nothing in the measure to prevent this bare majority from reducing whatever number of licensed houses may exist to one only for the entire locality. All I can say is, that if such a course were adopted in any district with which I might be connected I should very much like to be the owner of that one public house. With regard to the third provision, I think there is less objection to that than to those I have already referred to. It provides that in the event of a majority so deciding no fresh licences shall be issued for a specified district. There may, however, be cases, especially in growing towns and neighbourhoods, where this may prove a great hardship; but, on the whole, I think it is a fair and just provision. I may, perhaps, be allowed to remind hon. Members opposite that but for their opposition to the proposal this would have been the actual law of the land at the present moment. There is one other anomaly in this Bill to which I desire to call the attention of the House, and I should like to hear any hon. Member explain how it can be reconciled with the justice of the case? Hon. Members will observe, if they look at Clause 13 of Section 1 of this Bill, that it is thereby provided that, if the total prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquor be carried, there shall be no appeal against that decision for a period of five years; but if, on the other hand, the prohibitory resolution is contemptuously rejected, and a victory is gained by the opponents of the Bill, one-tenth portion of the number of electors may put the whole district to the expense of a contest, not at the end of five years, but at the expiration of only two years. This seems to me a most unjust and, at the same time, an absolutely indefensible proposition. So much, Sir, for the Bill itself. Perhaps I may now be allowed to say a few words as to the general principles involved in this measure. There can be no doubt that those who support the introduction of this Bill are actuated by the best possible motives, and by a belief that it will tend to diminish drunkenness. I can only say that I heartily wish I could agree with them, and that, if I thought as they do, that the passing of a Bill limiting the number of public houses would result in a decrease of intemperance, although I could not support a measure containing such tremendously stringent provisions as this, I would go a long way towards it. I think that although this meddling with the rights of the public is open to grave objection, still, if the result is likely to be an increase of temperance and a diminution of drunkenness, the end would justify the means, even though it involves a restriction of the number of public houses and the abolition of those which might be proved to be unnecessary, provided no injustice were committed. But I ask, do the figures and the information we have obtained prove that the restrictive legislation already adopted has produced beneficial results of this character? It is true that we have not yet had entire prohibition in this country; but we have had restrictive legislation, if not in England, at least in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. I ask whether anyone who has carefully considered the matter would say that prohibition has proved a success in the countries in which it has been tried? All the evidence we have as yet had before us tends to show that prohibition has been a failure both under the Scott Act in Canada and in the United States, where drunkenness has enormously increased rather than diminished. But what is still more serious is that the effect of these prohibition laws in America has been to divert the liquor traffic from properly-regulated channels, and to encourage illicit drinking and illegal sale in houses where liquor is sold without any control whatever. In those places where the liquor traffic is under the least control, the prohibitive law has enormously added to the number of shebeens and illicit drinking houses. This being the case in America, what, Mr. Speaker, has been the result of restrictive legislation in those parts of the United Kingdom in which it has hitherto been tried? The hon. Member who introduced the Bill has spoken of a *plĕbiscite* which has been taken in Wales, and has said that the opinion of the majority of the Welsh people is thus shown to be in favour of his measure; but the House will have noticed that the hon. Member carefully abstained from furnishing figures as to whether drunkenness has increased or diminished in consequence of the Sunday prohibitive law in the Principality.

*MR. W. BOWEN ROWLANDS: I did not deal with Sunday closing in Wales further than to say that the Duke of Westminster was satisfied with the results, and that he hoped a similar law would soon prevail in England.

*THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN: No doubt the Duke of Westminster may be satisfied with the existing law, but I understood the hon. Member to give us the figures to show that Sunday closing has been instrumental in decreasing drunkenness in Wales.

*MR. W. BOWEN ROWLANDS: The Royal Commission reported in its favour.

*THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN: I hold in my hand the Report of the Commission appointed to inquire into the operation of the Sunday Closing Act in Wales, and I hope the House will allow me to quote a few figures which are there given by the Commissioners. I should state that the Commissioners sent out circulars to the Chief Constables of the 16 police divisions of Wales with a view to gather statistics in reference to drunkenness in Wales during the five years preceding the Act and five years subsequent to it. The Commissioners say—

> "We thought it right, however, to procure for ourselves, upon a basis carefully prepared, with reference to our inquiry, and so as to be as fair and as free from error as possible such statistics as were available. In doing so we resolved to take the 24 hours from 6 on Sunday morning as the fairest definition of Sunday for our purpose. We did so because it is obvious that cases which occurred earlier than that hour in the morning ought to be attributed rather to the dissipations of Saturday night than to anything which, in the proper sense of the word, could be termed Sunday drunkenness."

The Commissioners then give a tabulated comparison of the number of convictions obtained for offences involving drunkenness on Sundays in each of the five years mentioned, namely, from 1877 to 1881 inclusive, and from 1884 to 1888 inclusive. They also give a Return from four police districts as to which no comparison is possible, but such figures as they do give show that drunkenness in those counties has rather increased than diminished. I will quote the averages given of the results in the 12 counties from which full Returns were obtained for the two periods of five years. They are as follows: In Anglesey, before 1882, there were 13 convictions, and afterwards 7, or a slight decrease; Carnarvonshire, 75 in the first period and 57 in the second, also showing a decrease; Flintshire, 30 in the first period and 33 after, or a slight increase; Montgomeryshire, 17 in the first period and 12 in the second, a slight decrease; Brecknockshire, 32 in the first period and 9 in the second; Radnorshire, 13 in the first period and 3 in the second; Cardiganshire, 7 in the first period and 5 in the second; Glamorganshire, 379 in the first period and 643 in the second, or a large increase; Pembrokeshire, 11 in the first period and 17 in the second; Carmarthenshire, 9 in the first period and 11 in the second; Cardiff, 32 in the first period and 90 in the second; and, in Neath, 8 in the first period and 18 in the second. These figures show that the cases of Sunday drunkenness, after the passing of the Act, were almost half as numerous again as the cases before the passing of the Act. If Glamorgan is excluded from the calculation, as it is contended it ought to be owing to its proximity to England, though I cannot quite see the reason, the average number of cases of drunkenness before the Act is 22 to 25 after. I defy supporters of the Bill to contradict these figures, which show conclusively that the passing of the Act has not done much to decrease drunkenness on Sunday. There has been an inquiry before a Select Committee into the operation of the Irish Sunday Closing Act. [MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Hear, hear!] It is true that neither that Select Committee nor the Welsh Commission advocated a repeal of the Sunday Closing Act; but do either of them advocate its extension? Let me read what the Royal Commissioners say in their Report on this point. They say—

> "We must dismiss as equally impracticable the proposal to close public houses absolutely and for all purposes for the whole of Sunday. Such a law would impose a great hardship on those who legitimately travel on Sunday, and would probably encourage the growth of illicit drinking."

In this connection I may mention the very valuable evidence given before the Commission by Mr. David Davies, of Cardiff, than whom from his knowledge and experience no one is entitled to speak with greater authority. He gave evidence which is indisputable of the enormous increase of shebeens in Cardiff since the Welsh Sunday Closing Act came into force, and so absolutely and clearly did he make out his case that Lord Aberdare, who is a strong supporter of Sunday closing, was bound to admit the fact. The Select Committee upon the Irish Act did not specifically pronounce against the total closing on Sunday, but they certainly do not pronounce in favour of it, and I think they do not even recognise the possibility of it. In fact, they treated it as an absolutely impracticable idea. And here I should like to quote the evidence of Mr. O'Donel, the Chief Police Magistrate of Dublin. Referring to some evidence given before a previous Committee he says—

> "My view remains the same—that the total closing of public houses on Sunday would inevitably result in an enormous increase of shebeens, and bring about a far more demoralising effect than would be caused by leaving matters as they now are."

If, in the opinion of experts, such would be the result of closing public houses on one day in the week, how much more serious would be the danger if the public houses of a locality were closed altogether? A man who wants a drink will certainly find means to obtain it, and it is surely better that he should get it in a place subject to legal control than in some unlicensed house. I think there is a great deal to be said for shutting up public houses for longer hours on Sunday, and perhaps for shutting them at an earlier hour on Saturday night; and when a publican is discovered supplying a drunken man with drink, by all means let him be prosecuted with the utmost rigour. But I appeal to the House not to pass a measure which will result in the increase of illicit drinking houses, bogus clubs, and shebeens, which are a prolific source of drunkenness, immorality, and crime. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time on this day six months.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the word "now," and at the end of the Question to add the words "upon this day six months."—(*The Marquess of Carmarthen.)*

Question proposed, "That the word 'now' stand part of the Question."

*(1.35.) MR. J. M. MACLEAN (Oldham): I rise to second the Amendment which has been proposed by my noble Friend. It seems to be usual in this House for those Members who are obliged to speak on proposed measures of legislation of this kind to explain that they have no personal or interested motives in taking one side or the other. Personally, I can disclaim any fanaticism and also any pecuniary interest in any distillery or brewery; neither do I take up the question as a politician, for I suppose the temperance vote in the borough I represent is quite as strong as the publican vote. I look at this matter, I think, fairly. Bills of this kind raise the very important question how far it is right for a majority in this country to interfere with the enjoyments and amusements of the minority. By this Bill it is proposed to sweep away entirely the right of the minority in any particular district to drink any kind of strong liquor, and I maintain that would be a very strong measure indeed for this Parliament to take. The hon. and learned Gentleman who moved the Bill rather congratulated himself on the fact that the Bill was an evasion of direct legislation by the Imperial Parliament. I should have admired his courage much more if he had come forward with a Bill for enforcing prohibition throughout the whole of the United Kingdom, but he knows perfectly well a measure of that kind would have no chance of passing this House. The hon.

and learned Gentleman falls back on the principle of local veto and says—

> "If two-thirds of the people of any district think there should be no strong liquor sold in their district give them the right to impose their will upon the minority."

He made a very able and good humoured speech, and if the carrying out of an Act of this kind were entrusted to him, and men like him, very possibly it might be worked in a tolerably fair spirit. But the Bill itself is drawn in a very unfair and intolerant spirit. There is a clause which provides that when prohibition has been carried by the whole of the ratepayers no change shall be made for five years afterwards. That clause, coupled with the other clause which allows the advocates of prohibition to demand a fresh poll two years after the sense of the ratepayers has been taken, shows how this Bill is intended to favour one particular class of the community alone. I have been, to some extent, reassured as to what might be the effect of popular veto in this matter by the example of what has taken place in the London County Council within the last two years. We know that when some of the members of that Council were elected they had great ideas of what they were going to do to reform the amusements, and improve the moral taste of the population of London. We have heard very little lately of that outcry, because the members of the Council soon found the real sense of their constituents was very much against the interference contemplated. It is quite possible that if the verdict of the people could be obtained, say, every six months, on a question of this kind, it would be found that the people were against any kind of prohibition such as is contemplated by the Bill. But the measure itself lays it down that when once the champions of the Bill have got their grip on the throat of that section of the population who indulge in strong drink, they are not to relax it for five years, no matter by what means the decision may have been brought about. I do not think that is a state of things that will commend itself to the good sense of the people of the country. The Mover of the Bill asserted that the Bill would redress the evils arising from the consumption of intoxicating liquors. He quoted the figures of the liquor bill of the country. He showed us what we all know from the speeches made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer that there has been a very large increase in the consumption of intoxicating liquor during the last two or three years. But he fails to make out his case unless he can show that along with that increase there has been a corresponding increase in the amount of crime and pauperism and mortality. It is always put forward as an excuse for measures of this kind that the consumption of strong drink inevitably leads to an increase in the number of criminals and paupers, and an increase in the death-rate. I challenge any Member opposite to show that the increase in the consumption of strong drink has been accompanied by anything in the way of an increase either of pauperism or of crime. At the present time pauperism is less in proportion to the population than it has been at any time within the last 50 years, and we know from statistics that a good many of our prisons are, happily, nearly empty. If there has been any increase in the death-rate of the country, it has been due to the severity of the winter rather than to any increase in the consumption of intoxicating liquor; indeed, last year the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave as one reason why there had been such a largely increased consumption the fact that many people had drunk rum to arm themselves against influenza. My strong objection to the Bill is that, practically, it would have no effect in bringing about the result which the hon. and learned Member desires. I believe its operation would be at once costly and useless. The hon. and learned Gentleman did not attempt to prove that prohibition anywhere has been successful in effecting the purpose he has in view. Everyone who has visited the United States will agree that the Prohibition Laws there have either been repealed or are only retained where it is well known they are systematically evaded. I have some facts here taken from a Blue Book which has recently been presented to the House, showing what has been the result of the Prohibition Laws in the various Australasian Colonies. In Queensland a Bill was passed in 1885, and another in 1886, and the Report is that the ratepayers there are quite indifferent to the law, which has produced no appreciable effect upon drunkenness. In Western Australia the Liquor Laws are inefficient to prevent Sunday opening and sly drinking; while in New Zealand it is admitted on all sides that the Local Option Clauses of the Act of 1881 have not had the effect anticipated, and the cost of elections has been very considerable; in many cases every vote cost over £2. Lord Hopetoun reports that in Victoria there is a general indifference, that the Local Option Clauses have not done good, and that Sunday closing has caused no decrease in drunkenness. It is said that an Act of this kind has been very successful in Scotland. I daresay it is possible that a Sunday Closing Act has been more effectual in Scotland than in Wales. Scotland is a whisky-drinking country, and the people can easily take home on the Saturday night a supply sufficient to last them over Sunday. They are thus able to combine an outward observance of the law on Sunday with an inward indulgence in as much whisky as they wish for. But it is otherwise in Wales, which is mostly a beer-drinking country. The hon. and learned Member stated that the operation of the Sunday Closing Act in Wales has been fraught with great advantage to the people. The Commissioners make no statement of that kind. The inquiry by the Royal Commissioners showed that the Sunday Closing Act has been a complete failure. [*Cries of* "No!"] Well, the Commissioners say—

> "In those districts which were already temperate and progressive in sobriety, it has acted as a powerful aid to the cause of temperance by removing a temptation from a weak minority. But that minority was always a small, and, we think, a diminishing one; we also doubt whether the earnest and zealous advocates of the cause of temperance who have appeared in such large numbers before us would have found their efforts to reduce it still further more hampered by the possibility of obtaining drink under the old system than by the evasion of the present law, which has been proved before us. We admit, however, that the majority of them seem to hold a different opinion. In Cardiff, and some of the mining districts, the Act cannot be said to have diminished intemperence. We have already indicated our opinion, that the provision of places open on Sunday for the enjoyment of social intercourse and innocent recreation, not incompatible with due attention to the religious duties of that day, would prove in practice as strong an inducement to the formation of temperate habits as the mere closing of the public houses without the provision of any such counter attractions."

The Commissioners go on to say—

> "Had it been our duty to advise on the form of the original legislation, we might have suggested that some facilities should have been given for obtaining drink in small quantities for domestic consumption."

I think that shows that they were in favour of the repeal of the Act prescribing the total closing of public-houses in Wales on Sunday. That is a fair argument to draw from the words of the Report. The Commissioners go on to say that extraordinary precautions will be necessary in order that the Act may be worked effectively in the future. It is difficult to tell who is a *bonâ fide* traveller or not, and no doubt the law has been evaded to a large extent by people pretending to be travellers. The Commissioners, to put an end to this state of things, proposed that the occupier of every house licensed for the refreshment of travellers should be compelled to keep a book in which the name of every person served should be entered, and the date on which he was served, this book to be open to the inspection of the police. This seems very much the same thing as proposing that nobody shall travel about this country on Sunday unless he carries a passport certifying who he is, and is able to give such an exact description that the police may be able to find out where he lives, and whether he was a *bonâ fide* traveller on that date. But the Commissioners were not satisfied even with that extraordinary precaution, because they laid down certainly a very remarkable theory, that every district in which prohibition was enforced should have what I may call a strategical frontier. They recommended that the boundaries of boroughs and counties should be remodelled, because people now come over the border from one district to another and get drink in Monmouthshire, for instance, where the Welsh Sunday Closing Act is not in force, so that the whole division of counties and boroughs, according to these Commissioners, would have to be altered in order that prohibition might be successful in any particular district. This is the way in which the Sunday Closing Act in Wales is at present evaded. What would be the state of things if these difficulties were multiplied sevenfold by the enforcement of total prohibition in many districts of Wales throughout the whole week? Why, it would be necessary—and here I think of the great question of cost, for hon. Members who support measures of this kind say they would reduce the expense of maintaining the Police Force in this country, because so many constables would not be required—it would be necessary to increase the Police Force enormously before we could prevent the systematic evasion of laws of this kind. It is the case elsewhere, and the case in Wales just now, under the Sunday Closing Act. We should have to set up a Custom House, with Inspectors, at every strategical frontier of the district to be defended, and every traveller going into the district under a law of this kind would be liable to have his luggage searched, so that it might be seen whether he was carrying strong liquor into the district. We should have the strongest barriers set up all round the Puritanical districts where this would be enforced. In fact, we should have a revival of the system of Custom Houses to enforce the payment of duties, the inconveniences of which are so strongly felt on the Continent. One of the chief blessings of life in this country is that an Englishman can enjoy perfect freedom of intercourse with his fellow-men. Of course, all that would be done away with under this Bill. Everywhere bad blood would be raised. The people of one district would be fighting against the people of another, and there would be a most minute inspection into the habits and ways of every man travelling along the high road in the country. Perhaps this would be carried into the private household, and we should have every man shadowed by a spy to know whether he consumes strong drink or not. In fact, this is one of those proposals of legislation Lord Salisbury so happily ridiculed in a recent speech to the Associated Chambers of Commerce, when he protested against the craze for inspection which now inspires so many measures brought into this House. If we go on at the present rate we shall soon arrive at a state of things when half the population of the country will be perpetually engaged in inspecting the other half. The moral sense of the community would be perverted if a law of this kind prevailed, and the state of things revived when public opinion was on the side of smugglers. The law would be systematically evaded, and people would not be better, but worse, off for legislation of this kind. I oppose this Bill because I think it is one of the many mischievous attempts which are made from time to time in our day, and which we hear of so constantly, to do away with that spirit of respect for personal liberty which has always formed a distinguishing feature of English civilisation.

(2.14.) **Mr. T. W. RUSSELL** (Tyrone, S.): The fact that there are three Local Veto Bills on the Paper today, one of which is an Irish Bill, is my excuse for intervening in this Debate. One of the first things which struck me this afternoon was that there was nothing Welsh in this Bill save its title. Its rejection was moved by a Member for a Metropolitan constituency, and seconded by a countryman of my own who sits for a Lancashire constituency; and I suppose, therefore, that it may be taken for granted that not a single Member from the Principality could be found courageous enough to face the undertaking of moving the rejection. I have listened to Debates on the temperance question for 26 years, and I never remember a Debate taking place in which the hon. Members who opposed these Bills did not rise and say that they were as much opposed to intemperance as those on this side of the House, and that it is not a Party question. While I have no doubt that hon. Members are sincere in making that statement, people outside the House see that these hon. Members do nothing to abate intemperance, and I am very much afraid that it has become recognised that the Liberals have become the party of temperance reform. Just as in the struggle in America against slavery the Republican Party became the Party of the Abolitionists, so when measures intended to abate the evils of intemperance come before this House hon. Members opposite are not keen to support them. I think that the arguments used by the noble Lord who moved the rejection of the Bill were more questions for discussion in Committee than arguments in connection with the Second Reading of a Bill. My noble Friend objected, for example, to the proposal for a two-thirds majority, and he objected to the clause providing that the Bill, if passed, shall remain in force five years; but, after all, these are objections not to principle, but to detail. These should be reserved for Committee, at which stage they would form proper subjects for a "give and take" policy. The Temperance Party have always held that the country is ready and anxious for Imperial legislation on the question, and, therefore, I am sorry that the Debate has been made one upon Sunday Closing. The noble Lord said that Sunday Closing in Wales had been a failure, and hinted that something of the same kind had been the case with regard to Ireland. Now, I have no right to speak for Wales: the Welsh Members will do that, but it struck me as a rather singular fact that a Commission had been appointed to inquire into the working of the Welsh Act, and, after hearing all evidence, that Commission positively refused to advise the repeal of the Act. I think, therefore, that hon. Members are entirely out of court when they come to this House and declare that measure to be a total failure. If it is a total failure, why had not the Commission the courage to recommend its repeal? We are told that the Welsh Members are in favour of the Bill. Surely that is some proof that the people of Wales also hold the same view. The noble Lord, referring to Ireland, said that the Committee which sat upstairs in 1888 did not recommend the extension of total Sunday Closing. Now I was a Member of that Committee, which was asked for by hon. Members opposed to Sunday Closing, and the recommendation made was that the Act had worked so well in Ireland that the five cities ought to be included which were excluded in 1878, from its operation; and, more than that, the Committee recognised that where the Act had not been quite successful, the reason was the prevalence of the *bonâ fide* traveller, and they recommended that the *bonâ fide* traveller should have to walk six miles in order to get drink. I maintain, therefore, that the noble Lord was entirely wrong as regards that measure.

*THE MARQUESS OF CARMARTHEN: I myself advocated more strict provisions for Sunday Closing. All I stated was that neither the Commission nor the Irish Committee recommended the complete closing of public houses on Sunday.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: What does the noble Lord mean by complete closing? Does he mean closed to *bonâ fide* travellers? The Temperance Party do not recommend the closing of public houses to *bonâ fide* travellers; they only contend that the *bonâ fide* traveller should be one in earnest. The Act where it has failed has done so, not because it is prohibitory, but because the prohibition is imperfect. We have a great deal of prophecy indulged in in all these Debates as to the dreadful things that are to happen if this measure is passed; but are there no dreadful things happening now, and are we to be afraid of trying to grapple with them? The hon. Member for Oldham has taken what is real and substantial ground against this Bill, namely, that it is an interference on the part of a majority of the people with the rights and enjoyments and privileges of the minority. That is a substantial argument, and I have no desire to burke it. But what does it amount to? The hon. Member for Oldham is bound to admit that where the Act is put in force there must be a majority desirous of getting rid of the traffic, or prohibition could not be decreed. But he denied that the majority had a right to interfere with the privileges and rights of the minority. I will meet him on his own ground, and ask the hon. Member what right the minority in a district have to force upon the majority all the cruel results of this liquor traffic—crime, pauperism, lunacy, and all sorts of mischief, and increased taxation? If the majority have no right to coerce the minority, it becomes infinitely worse when the minority have a right to enforce on the majority this traffic with all its baneful results. The hon. Member for Oldham also declared that prohibition had failed wherever it has been tried. But we have prohibition, more or less, throughout the United Kingdom, and where there is not complete Sunday closing the hours of sale are much less than on week days. The contention of the Temperance Party is that as are the facilities for obtaining drink so will drunkenness be; and the day upon which the hours are reduced is that day upon which there is least drunkenness. The hon. Member also stated that the result had been disastrous in our colonies. I am not concerned to deny that attempts to enforce this Act have failed in several colonies. I think that the Temperance Party are badly advised when they burke any fact like that, but it is not necessary to go to the colonies for proof as to what prohibition is capable of doing. There are not many things in Ireland we can quote with pleasure; but there is one thing in this connection we can hold up for admiration in this House. For 25 years in Ireland there has been carried out the experiment of absolute prohibition, not in an agricultural district, but in a town in which there are 4,000 or 5,000 factory operatives living. This town belongs to one man, and he once had a seat in this House. From the time the town was built no public house has been allowed to be opened within its boundaries. And what is the result? In that town, in County Armagh, there is no police barrack. Will you find another town in Ireland of which this can be said? A town of this size, under the ordinary conditions, with public-houses, would have some 14 or 15 policemen stationed in it. In Bessbrook there are no police and no police barrack. There is no pawn-office, there is no workhouse, no pauperism, no overcrowding, no destitution; and the people, if you ask them, will admit that they owe these blessings to the absence of public-houses. It is true the town of Newry is within a short distance of Bessbrook, but we do not find that the people rush to Newry to get drink, as we are told people will under such circumstances. I decline to go to Canada or Australia for illustration when I have this example at Bessbrook, and there are hundreds of parishes in England and Scotland where landlords have adopted this method of protecting their property, and where the plan has worked admirably; and I say this right that owners have and use for the protection of their interests is a right that ought to be given to occupiers, who have interests as valuable as owners. Now, the hon. Member for Oldham went a step further, and declared that it did not necessarily follow that increased drinking produced increased crime, or that it increased pauperism in the country.

*MR. J. M. MACLEAN: I asked for proof that it had done so in recent years.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL: Well, it is quite true that the action of the liquor traffic in this direction may be met by action on the other side. It is quite possible that the consumption of drink may increase in times of prosperity and yet that pauperism may not increase in the way you might naturally expect. But that is not a proof of the innocence of the liquor traffic. It is because increased prosperity enables the people to spend more. But the hon. Member cannot deny the testimony of every Commission and every Committee which has inquired into this subject, that drink is the source of seven-eighths of the crime, of three-fourths of the pauperism, and of nearly all of the destitution of the country. Something was said in the beginning of this Debate about the adulteration of drink, and that has always been an argument with hon. Members. In talking with me and commiserating my total abstinence they have said, "It is not the good drink, it is the bad drink, that does the harm," and they have let themselves loose upon adulteration. Now we have had this question settled for all time. For the last few weeks we have had a Committee sitting upstairs upon a very interesting inquiry into this very subject. The hon. Member for North Longford (Mr. T. M. Healy) alarmed us last Session by declaring that the Irish people were being destroyed by drinking new whisky, and that fusel oil was the thing that did the harm; and he made a piteous appeal that whisky should be confined for two years in bond before being let out to do its work—that it should be an imprisoned spirit for that period. I am glad to say the House granted a Select Committee to inquire into this subject. It has been a most interesting inquiry; there have been experiments with fusel oil, with ether, with whisky one year old, two years, three years, five years old, and it is surprising that any of the Members of the Committee were sober at 3 o'clock. But one thing comes out of the inquiry without doubt—that fusel oil is not the criminal at all. It has been proved to demonstration by the right hon. Member for Leeds (Sir Lyon Playfair), who is quite full of the subject, that the fusel oil contained in whisky is not the real sinner—that new whisky is rather less harmful than old whisky. I hope, then, that we have heard the last of the cant about adulteration and good drink. Let people make up their minds it is the alcohol that does the mischief. Another argument I have heard against the Bill is that, while the principle may be approved, there is objection to dealing piecemeal with the question. "Why Wales?" it is asked. "Why not England, why not Ireland, why not Scotland?" To that I say, we have done our best under the circumstances. We have Bills for each country on the Order Book. There are good reasons for proceeding in a tentative way. If Wales, or Scotland, or Ireland wishes to have no public-houses, or fewer public-houses, why should the people of Wales, or Scotland, or Ireland be denied the carrying out of their desire because England has no such desire? ["Hear, hear!"] I appreciate that cheer. It means, I presume, "Why don't you carry such an argument to its logical conclusion?" I will tell you why. Nobody who has lived for 50 years ever dreams of carrying out anything to its logical conclusion. I prefer to vote for a sectional Bill rather than for a general Bill, because I wish to see the experiment tried before we commit ourselves to a larger area. It has been tried with Sunday closing, and I am prepared to proceed in a similar way with this. I am not at all inconsistent. The other night I voted with the Welsh Members in favour of the Welsh people having their way in regard to Church Establishment, and I should be inconsistent if I refused to let them have the same right in regard to the establishment of public-houses, and, if it became a choice as to which should have precedence, I should say begin first with the public-houses. I repeat, it is a wise thing to proceed in a tentative way. What does the Bill propose to do? It is not necessarily a Bill for prohibition. It is quite true that the people in any locality can decree prohibition, and I contend for their right to do this, if they wish. They may decree prohibition, or they may content themselves with saying no new licences shall be granted, or they may decree there shall be no restriction. A most important decision was submitted to the judgment of the House of Lords within the last few days. I have never wavered in my opinion—I am not going to anticipate that judgment, but I have never wavered in my opinion that as regards England, Wales and Scotland, Magistrates have a right to withdraw public house licences as they choose; they must act judicially, but they have the right undoubtedly in my opinion. But should the decision of the House of Lords put that beyond all question, will it not be infinitely better that Magistrates should have some indication of local opinion in the district rather than go upon their own responsibility, and shut up public houses here and there, simply because they think they are not wanted? It would be infinitely better to give them this guiding direction, rather than allow them to deal with the matter after their own discretion, without any guide at all. There are two classes of Members to whom I may appeal to vote for this Bill even with the prohibitory clause. In the first place all Temperance Reformers —and I am glad to see a considerable number in the House—will vote for the Bill on temperance grounds, pure and simple. They, like myself, have been struggling for something like 30 years against the evil, and they are anxious to see something done. We shall vote for the Bill because it is a Temperance Bill designed to do temperance work. But there is another class of Members who may vote for it on totally different grounds. I can understand Members saying I do not care whether the people increase or lessen public houses. I am in favour of the Democratic principle of giving people local control. I, too, am in favour of that principle. Both as a temperance man, and as one who believes that the people should control the traffic, I vote for the prohibitory clause. For the House of Commons to reject this Bill to-day would be a most disastrous thing. I took a line last Session in opposition to many of my hon. Friends with whom I have always worked in this cause, because I was anxious, above everything, to try and get something done to stay this evil. After having listened to Debates for many years on this question, I say it would be a disastrous thing if the House of Commons, in the face of facts that meet us in our daily life, were to throw out the Bill. Much do we hear of workmen's questions and of labour problems, of which the issues are higher wages and more leisure, and here, I say, is a Bill that practically secures both these things. It will enable wages to be saved that now are squandered, time to be properly occupied that now is wasted. We hear of the miseries of "Darkest England" and of the "submerged tenth" of our population, of farm colonies and the exportation of those who have stumbled or fallen in our midst. But here is a means that offers a chance to men who have stumbled through weakness to regain their position at home. Instead of exporting them to colonies beyond sea, give them a chance of living a brighter life at home. I beseech the House of Commons not to throw out the Bill. The evil we have to deal with is an increasing evil, and with the increase of our material prosperity shows no abatement; indeed, the tendency, unfortunately, is the other way. Because this evil has been increasing while we for the last half century have been talking about it, I beg the House of Commons not to reject the Bill, but to allow this experiment to be made; give the people the chance of separating themselves from the nuisance and evil temptations that Magistrates, in innumerable instances, force upon them.

*(2.45) MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): As a very old temperance advocate I may be allowed to say a few words on this Bill. I congratulate the hon. Member who has just spoken and the hon. and learned Gentleman who introduced the Bill, upon the tone of their speeches, with a very large portion of which I find myself in agreement. I have used similar language and the same arguments over and over again, and I look at the question from the stand-point of a reformer. Anxious as I am to promote the cause of temperance, I beg leave to impress upon hon. Members that the cause of temperance is universal, and not local. Surely comparatively sober Wales does not, or ought not, to occupy our minds quite so much as disorderly, drunken London. There are more public-houses, in proportion to population, in London than anywhere else; it is to London that temperance reformers ought to turn their attention; it is there, among the drunken, degraded population of the Metropolis, I should be glad to join with my hon. Friends in promoting temperance reform. The Bill is to apply to Wales. Do hon. Members know there is no such a place as Wales? There are 12 shires grouped together, and in old Acts, for certain judicial purposes, these shires have been designated Wales; but the purposes and objects for which they were grouped have long ago passed away. Welsh people occupy England and English people occupy Wales. In my own district of Powisland, once a part of historic Wales, now a part of Shropshire, there are a large number of Welsh people, whereas in many districts of the 12 shires there is a larger English than Welsh population. The Wales which was created by an Act of Henry VIII. is not a district for which a proposal like this can be conveniently put forward. Just as well might you attempt to legislate for East Anglia, Mercia, or Northumbria; just as well might you go back to the Heptarchy as seek to legislate in this manner for Wales and Monmouth. There is a practical difficulty which does not seem to have occurred to hon. Members. My own county borders on the Counties of Flint, Denbigh, Montgomery and Radnor, it is a long, irregular boundary—are we to have an Act like this in operation on one side of the border line and not on the other? If the 12 counties formed an island there might be some excuse for exceptional legislation. The Sunday Closing Act, which is in operation in the 12 shires, has caused the greatest amount of inconvenience all along the border. There is one parish where the division runs along the centre of the road, with the result that one side of the road public houses close on Sunday; on the other side they are open—a cumbersome and most awkward arrangement for the inhabitants and the trade. But my objection is not only to the local character of the Bill; from the temperance point of view, I ask what will be the direct and indirect effect of this measure? We know, from the Report of the Commissioners, that in those places where the Sunday Closing Act has been in operation, numbers of unlicensed houses have almost invariably sprung up where drink is sold. Such, notably,

has been the effect in Glamorganshire and in Cardiff. As a temperance advocate, I protest against legislation which will have this effect. This Bill may be described as one for the creation of unlicensed drinking houses. Then the Bill proposes to authorise certain persons to sell drink, quite apart from the Licensing Authority. Every druggist and pharmaceutical chemist is to be allowed to sell as much liquor as he likes. All a person has to do is to get a certificate from a doctor, and he may go to one of these places and buy as much liquor as he likes; and I do not know that there is anything to prevent him drinking it on the premises. Every druggist in the 12 shires may set apart a room where persons may be supplied with drink. With this exception, it is to be made a punishable offence to dispose of liquor. I do not quite understand what is meant; the obvious way of disposing of liquor is to drink it. But if a man disposes of liquor, he is to be punished by having all his utensils taken away from him. It may be observed too, in passing, that the Bill indirectly introduces women's suffrage. I object to having the Welsh people and the English people who live in Wales treated as a conquered people; I object to them being considered a people upon whom, as the hon. Member said just now, experiments may be tried. One of the hon. Member's argument was that the Welsh people should be the *corpus vile* of experiment. I think it was an unpatriotic argument. I object to such exceptional legislation; the Bill is a retrograde step, and it is injurious to the cause of temperance to deal with it on local, not universal, principles, and after the piecemeal fashion of this crude Bill.

(2.58.) MR. M'LAGAN (Linlithgow): As frequent references have been made to Scotland, I, as a Scotch Member, may be allowed to say a few words. Certainly, I can say the experience in Scotland is that where there is increase in consumption of drink there is increase in disorder, and where there are more licensed houses more police are required. The noble Lord who moved the rejection of the Bill said that Sunday closing in Scotland had been a failure, but he gave us no proof of that. The hon. Member for Oldham, too, said that drinking is carried on secretly. What proof is there of this? Police statistics show that in the arrests for being drunk and disorderly, the proportion on Sundays is as 1 to 3½ on every other day in the week; and a certain portion of the Sunday arrests are due to the drinking on Saturday night. There can be no question but that Sunday closing in Scotland has been successful in its object. The Bill for Scotland is identical in principle with the one now before the House, and in speaking on the principle of this Bill, I am also speaking on the principle of the Scotch Bill. Why do we want this Bill? We want it because every other plan to stem the tide of drunkenness throughout the Kingdom has been tried and failed. Every landed proprietor has the power of keeping licensed houses off his land, and why should not the people have a like power? We have tried in Scotland what would be the effect of giving such a power, and we have found that there is a majority of five to one in favour of the people having the control, and, if the control is granted, five to one in favour of having prohibition of all licensed houses. It is said that it is more constitutional to have Licensing Boards than to give the people a direct veto. I do not admit this, and in any case where Boards have been tried in Canada they have failed, and the Canadians have been obliged to resort to the direct veto. Moreover, I contend that if we ask the people to vote on one principle, and on one principle alone, we shall get a truer idea of what their views are than if you call on them to vote for a new Board. Notwithstanding what is sometimes asserted, I maintain, on the authority of Mr. Goldwin Smith, Mr. Hepworth Dixon, and Mr. Osborne Smith, that wherever prohibition has been tried in America it has not failed but succeeded. It has been pointed out, for instance, that in one American town of 60,000 inhabitants there is no policeman. Mr. Hepworth Dixon, when he was there, asked whether there was a gaol, and he was told that there was, but there had been no one in it for two years, except a man who had come from another country. It is said that in Canada the people have voted against the continuance of the veto. That was because the law had not been enforced. In those parts of Canada where the Scott Act is in operation there is a less consumption of drink per head of the population than where it is not in operation. For instance, in Prince Edward Island, where the Scott Act is maintained in full force, the consumption is only half a gallon per head, whereas in British Columbia, where the Act does not prevail, the consumption is eight gallons per head of the population. As the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) has shown, Sunday closing has not failed in Ireland, and it has not failed in Scotland. It cannot be said this is a tyrannical measure, as it merely gives the people the control they ought to have over the liquor traffic, and I entreat the House to give it a Second Reading.

(3.8.) MR. M. J. STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I will not trespass long on the attention of the House, but I wish to say a few words on the principle of this measure, and in support of the Second Reading. I think it will be admitted by all Members, whether for or against the Bill, that a great part of our licensing administration has been a failure. There are several hundreds of Statutes dealing with the subject on the Statute Book, and yet we know as a fact that there is no great diminution of drinking, while public houses are, if not on the increase, at all events, not perceptibly diminishing. I think something ought to be done to restrain the number of those public houses, and unless some severe, and perhaps, what may be called drastic, legislation is placed on the Statute Book, a more moderate measure will not effect the object we have in view. I have always advocated the adoption of moderate measures, and have often reasoned with my temperance friends because they are too anxious to get things all their own way. I feel that you can really only touch this subject by treating it piece by piece. It is all very well to say it would be right and wise to adopt a general measure over the whole country. The hon. Member for Shropshire stated that real and great inconvenience was caused by having a number of public houses situated on the very confines of his county. No doubt a comprehensive measure might be a very useful one, but would that suit all the different localities? I maintain that if this measure is adopted there will be no real hardship in any particular locality, because it will have the assent of two-thirds of the ratepayers. There will be no forcing a large minority to agree to the wishes of a small majority. I am glad that the hon. Member who moved the measure has put in the two-thirds majority. I would not be a party to a scheme by which a mere majority would have the power of imposing its will on a locality. The question is a very important one, involving many considerations besides that of passing the Bill through this House, for we have the question of compensation before us, and though it has been determined that money compensation shall never be paid, it is a sort of compensation to say that public houses shall have a certain notice before they are called upon to close their doors. I question whether Parliament would sanction the taking away of a licence even at one year's notice. There would have to be several years' notice. You cannot expect legislation in opposition to public opinion, but you can expect to legislate with public opinion, and that public opinion in this country is not to treat harshly those to whom the law has given certain rights and powers, so long as those rights and powers are exercised in a proper manner. I would say to my temperance friends, in this House and out of it, that if they would adopt some such scheme for controlling the number of public houses in a district as is proposed in this Bill, or early closing on Saturday night, or a scheme for closing for a greater number of hours on Sundays, or for diminishing the infringement of the Sunday Closing Act under the *bonâ fide* traveller clause, they would be doing a great deal towards establishing proper temperance principles throughout the country. But if these points are not attended to, even if we get the Second Reading of this Bill we shall still be a long way from what is right and just on this great question. I may be asked on what general grounds do I support the Bill? Well, in the first instance, I support this Bill because I admit the principle of it, and we may depend upon it that at the next election there will be a very strong consensus of opinion on this point—that the people shall have more say in the giving and control of licences than they have had hitherto. Last autumn I made a tour in Canada and the United States, and I noted a profound feeling among all persons there both of high and low degree that the

Prohibition Acts, although they may not have been carried out in their entirety in different States, are nevertheless wise and reasonable, and the people there will not allow those Acts to be taken off the Statute Book. On the whole, these Acts are doing good, and therefore we ought to try the experiment of giving similar powers to Wales which the Bill asks for. In Yarmouth in Nova Scotia, a town of 8,000 inhabitants, no intoxicating liquors are allowed to be sold, and in that town they have no Poor Law and no paupers, the people are contended and most obedient to the law. The men there are fishermen, and, owing to the conditions of their occupation, they have to remain at home three-fourths of the year. They occupy that time in tilling small patches of arable land; but they are just the sort of people who, making their harvest by fishing in a small space of time, would spend the best part of their leisure consuming alcoholic liquors if it were not for the Prohibition Law. As it is they are very comfortably off. Pauperism does not exist amongst them, and though there is not very much to make them rich, they are contented. I move about a great deal in Scotland, England, and other countries, and I can assure the House that my experience is that wherever there are no public houses there are fewer policemen, and the poor are fewer and better off. Those who visit the prisons must know that the inmates, by their own confession, get there from having given way to drink. Many persons consider that the County Council would not be a fit body to manage these matters. My opinion, however, is that if we make the areas large there will be no tyrannical operations going on in them; and so long as a large number of persons are got to deal with the matter, whether in a County Council or other body, a just and fair view will be taken on the whole. Although I do not approve of all the clauses in the Bill, I shall, with great cheerfulness, vote for the Second Reading.

*MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): The noble Lord who moved the rejection of the Bill expressed his regret that the question has been made a Party question. In that regret I cordially join. But whose fault is it that it has been made a Party question? The promoters of the Bill would welcome most heartily the co-operation of the noble Lord, as of any other Member who sits on the Conservative Benches—and as, in fact, they welcome the very able assistance and co-operation of the hon. Member who has just sat down. Speaking from the experience of nearly a quarter of a century, I can say this has been made a Party question from the very first by our opponents. In my county almost every licensed victualler is an unpaid Conservative agent, and every public-house is a centre of Conservative activity. Whenever we take up a newspaper on the occasion of an election we see it stated that the licensed victuallers' vote will go solid for the Conservative candidate. It is a remarkable fact that of the three Members who have risen to oppose this Bill, not one is in any true sense of the word connected with Wales. The noble Lord who moved its rejection takes his title from Wales. The hon. Member beside him (Mr. Maclean) is, I believe, the proprietor of a Welsh Conservative newspaper; and the hon. Member who spoke last but one on the Conservative side (Mr. Stanley Leighton) says he has a number of Welshmen in his constituency. But I am afraid that after the speech which the hon. Member has addressed to the House he will not find much support among his Welsh constituents. The hon. Member has said there is no such place as Wales. I suppose the hon. Member will tell us next that there is no such person as the Prince of Wales. The fact is that all the arguments founded on Wales being an integral part of England come too late. We have given distinctive treatment to Wales in the matter of Sunday closing, and the Government themselves claim credit for having passed a separate Intermediate Education Bill for Wales; and we know that nearly one-half of the Members of the House adopt special legislation for Wales in regard to disestablishment and disendowment of the Church as one of the planks of their platform; and, therefore, it is mere pedantry to attempt to deal with Wales as if it was merged in England. As to the argument of the hon. Member for Oldham, I was amazed to hear him say that the Welsh Sunday Closing Act is a failure. The hon. Member, if I remember rightly, was the man who pressed for the appointment of the Royal Commission. No doubt he thought that the Commission when it was appointed would curse the Sunday Closing Act, but, like the Moabite prophet, so far from cursing, the Commission blessed, the measure altogether. I took great interest in the inquiry and attended several of its meetings, and I can say that there was some police evidence to show that in some districts drunkenness has increased, but I believe that is due in great measure to the extra vigilance which the police exercise. The Commission laid hold of three causes which have led to the failure of that Act, namely, the bogus clubs, the *bonâ fide* traveller, and the English border. So far from advocating the repeal of the Act, the Commission actually recommended that it should be made more stringent in these three particulars. I will read the conclusions at which the Commission arrived—and I may here mention that the hon. Member opposite did not read the whole of the passage. They said—

> "One of the suggestions most frequently made to us was the Report of the Sunday Closing Act on its modification in the direction of repeal, by permitting the opening of public houses for a short time in the middle or evening of the day, for sale both in or off the premises, or for the table only.
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> "We cannot, after giving the fullest and most careful consideration, endorse either of these recommendations . . . . We are convinced that a change in either of these directions would be so unwelcome to so vast a majority of the population in so large an area of the Principality, that we do not think it ought to be forced on this larger area for the sake of a possible benefit to the rest of the country. Moreover, we find an almost complete absence of evidence of a desire for such an amendment of the law on the part of those classes who would be most likely to require or use it."

It is a very remarkable fact that wherever this experiment has been tried, whether in Wales, in Scotland, or in Ireland, the majority of the people are in favour of its being continued. It is said that this piecemeal legislation is the thin edge of the wedge. No doubt it is. This is an experimental measure. But if we make experiments, surely it is desirable that they should be made on congenial soil, and under the most favourable circumstances. I am sure I am within the mark when I say that wherever the people who are most directly affected, and who, therefore, take the strongest interest in the question and am best qualified to judge of its merits, are consulted, there is an overwhelming preponderance of opinion in favour of the Bill. I prefer the opinion of those who have been sent to this House by express mandate to give their votes in favour of the Bill to the views of gentlemen who cannot be said in any sense to represent Welsh opinion. I shall look with some curiosity at the Division List, to see if there is one single Welsh Member who has the hardihood to vote against the measure. At present it is the Magistrates who are intrusted with the delicate duty of deciding whether there shall be any more public houses. But the fact is that in Wales, perhaps even more than in England, the Magistrates are not a representative body, and they have not got the confidence of the people. Though the population of Flintshire is almost entirely Nonconformist, there is not one single Nonconformist Magistrate in the county. I do not think there is any part of the country where the conditions for trying this experiment are so favourable. Recollect that this is to be the power of the majority over the minority. It is not to be the despotic power of one man. You see over and over again what you are bound to call a "despotic" exercise of power by the Prince of Wales, on his estate, and by the Duke of Westminster, and you approve; but you deny to the majority the right of exercising a similar power. Yet the ratepayers are the most conversant with their own requirements and wishes. They are the people who suffer — not the Magistrates and their families. They wear the shoe, and those who wear the shoe know best where the shoe pinches. I do not say that there may not be in this Bill some points which it is desirable to alter in Committee, but they are all questions of detail. I ask the majority of the House to vote for the Second Reading and to support the principle of local veto generally, and I ask it to vote for the Bill in response to the appeal of the Principality, which has with no uncertain voice expressed approval of its provisions. I believe that if you were to reject this Bill, backed as it is by the unanimous voice of Wales and of its Representatives, you would make Representative Government an absolute fraud and a sham.

*(3.35.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): Mr. Speaker, I had the honour, yesterday, to receive a deputation from the United Kingdom Alliance in connection with this subject, and they claimed that the Government should allow a fair field and no favour. I have to inform the House that the Government accede to that request, and that we do not intend to put any pressure on those hon. Members who usually support us in the Division Lobbies. The Government leave hon. Members to take whichever line they think best. Speaking, however, for myself, I do not suppose that there is any hon. Member who is not sensible of the enormous mischief of excessive drinking, how much crime, pauperism, and misery throughout the country are due to the habits of intemperance, which, unhappily, are still too prevalent in these Islands. I do not think we are all agreed in the view which has been expressed in the course of the Debate, notably in the speech of the hon. Member for South Tyrone, that the partaking of alcoholic drink is an evil thing in itself, and a public wrong and crime. That is an opinion which I strongly and emphatically repudiate. We all agree that there ought to be a remedy, if we could find one, that would not prove worse than the disease. The hon. Member who introduced the Bill enumerated various legislative failures that have taken place in connection with this subject. In fact, the whole path of the House of Commons is strewn with skeletons and wrecks of legislation affecting the Liquor Question. There was Mr. Bruce's Bill of 1871, the Light Wines Bill, the Grocers' Licence System, restraints on adulteration, all of which have failed. Yet the hon. Member hopes by this particular legislative nostrum to succeed where other men have failed. I think that the hon. Member (Mr. Bowen Rowlands) has overstated the effect of the words which fell from the President of the Local Government Board. My right hon. Friend did not say that temperance could be brought about by legislation, but that wise and well-considered legislation could assist the cause of temperance. I am bound to say, as far as my own observation goes, and as far as I have been able to study the subject, there are many directions which open up a prospect much more hopeful than this rough and coarse method of total prohibition. There is, for example, the high licence system in force in the United States, and there are methods which have been suggested by the right hon. Member for West Birmingham. Those methods of reform hold out greater hopes of mitigating the social evil connected with the liquor traffic than that which is suggested by the promoters of this Bill. Describing the measure as briefly as I can I should say that it is a Bill which enables the ratepayers of any sanitary district, by popular veto, to prohibit absolutely within that district the sale, and only the sale, of intoxicating liquor. That seems to me to be unjust. The promoters of the Bill are proposing that at the end of the current licensing year, without any delay, without compensation, which we are told has gone for ever into the limbo whence nothing returns, with nothing to alleviate the harshness of the measure, we shall absolutely put a stop to the trade of a vast number of persons who have just as much right to the consideration of the House as all other law-abiding citizens, and whose trade has been fostered and protected by the Legislature. They are men who have been called upon to assist the police in maintaining public order and the public safety. To deal in that arbitrary way with so large a class of persons seems to me unjust. The measure also appears to me to be unjust to those moderate drinkers whose liberty I could not consent to control in this way. It would tell especially against the moderate drinkers of the poorer classes. The Bill does not prohibit the importation of drink. The rich man could send for drink to the neighbouring district, and he could get in as large a supply as he chose; but you would compel the poor man to go across the border and import drink for the rational and legitimate wants of his family. That seems to me to be a grave objection to the measure. If you permit importation across the border, how can you suppose that those who are easily tempted would abstain from going a short distance in order to be supplied with drink? Again, and this brings me to another objection, which is a very strong one. The measure is not a sincere one. It is a half-hearted and insincere measure. The hon. Member for South Tyrone said that the Bill means higher

wages and more leisure to the working man. If that is his opinion, why should not the promoters be straightforward and honest, and prohibit the use of intoxicating liquors, and not merely the sale? If it be really true that the consumption of intoxicating liquors was so great a social evil, why do not hon. Members have the courage to say that there shall be no more consumption of intoxicating liquors in the country? It seems to me, therefore, to be unjust, illogical, insincere, and half-hearted to strike at the sale and not at the use of alcoholic drink. I object to referring a question which involves such difficult social inquiry to a tribunal of a majority of two-thirds, or to any majority of ratepayers. I say this with no distrust to the ratepayers. In so complicated a question the representatives of the ratepayers are the proper tribunal to be referred to, rather than the whole body of the ratepayers, consulted by a popular poll and swayed by many influences. The Bill is launched as an experiment to be followed elsewhere; but in my opinion its working would simply be impossible in the larger towns. If it were attempted in London, for instance, I should be sorry to be responsible any longer for the peace and order of the Metropolis. As far as I can see, experience is against the system of prohibition, which is the groundwork of the present experiment. I will not attempt to repeat the arguments that have fallen from the noble Lord (the Marquess of Carmarthen), who, in a speech characterised by so much humour and ability, has moved the rejection of the measure. In those arguments the noble Lord showed how unfair the measure would be to the people of this country; and without amplifying what he has said, I would simply refer to the teachings we have derived from the experience of prohibitive legislation in other countries. The case of Canada, though not conclusive, is strong against the expediency of the system. The Scott Bill came into operation in Canada in 1878, the area of operation being the county. In Ontario 28 out of 42 counties adopted the Act, and two cities out of 11. After nine years' experience 10 counties repealed the Act, and all the others are taking steps to repeal it. In Quebec the Act was adopted originally by six counties, and two repealed it after a short experience. Turning to Australia, Queensland is the example most in point with regard to the Bill before the House, for that Bill was framed on the Queensland measure. The hon. Member for Cardiganshire avows that his Bill is founded on that of Queensland, its main provisions being exactly the same as those of the Queensland Bill. In Queensland there has been no single poll taken upon absolute prohibition; there has been one poll taken for reducing the licensed houses by one-third in number; and there have been 42 polls altogether against granting any new licences. In five or six cases the Resolution, not to allow any more new licences, has been rescinded. The inference I draw from these returns is that the experiment has not been successful. As to the American States, Mr. Goldwin Smith has pointed out very powerfully the failure of prohibition there, especially in Maine and Vermont. The attempt in Maine has been a complete and absolute failure, inasmuch as liquor is there sold to everybody who wants it in nearly every town in the State. In fact, no attempt is really made to enforce the law, and when it is seen that the law is thus evaded, on what ground, I ask, does the hon. Member for South Tyrone (Mr. T. W. Russell) anticipate in this country the results he hopes may follow the enactment of prohibitive legislation. If you compare the committals in Maine with what takes place in Canada, you will find that, whereas under prohibitive legislation in Maine there were 1,316 committals for drunkenness in one year, in Canada, when there was no prohibition, there were only 593 committals for the same class of offences, the population being about the same in both cases.

*MR. W. BOWEN ROWLANDS: Will the right hon. Gentleman refer to the figures for the Falkland and Pitcairn Islands, and other places, which show that prohibition has achieved most successful results?

*MR. MATTHEWS: I do not see the relevancy of the interruption. I was giving reasons for saying prohibition was not, on the whole, successful, and taking the case of Maine as a prominent example. What relevancy, then, can the case of the Falkland and Pitcairn Islands have? I should be happy if I could follow the hon. Member in any plausible and well-considered scheme to put an end to the temptations of drink; but on such a question as this I am bound to look round me and see what has followed the attempts already made in the same direction. In Vermont there is a marked increase in the number of places where liquor is sold, in spite of prohibition, and there is no concealment about the violation of the law. I have recently had occasion to make minute inquiries into a totally different subject, namely, the mode of dealing with the sale of inflammable liquors in America, and I have found, to my surprise, that the legislation affecting those commodities is of a much more stringent character than I should care to propose in this country, and yet this stringency of the law is accompanied by an almost total disregard of its provisions. Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania are instances of States which have tried prohibition, and have afterwards rejected it by great majorities. These facts give strong ground for pausing before launching on an experiment which is despotic in its operation, and unjust to large classes of the community. There has been a *plébiscite* in Wales showing, it is said, a strong feeling in favour of the Bill. In five Welsh counties there are 23,000 people who voted in favour of the Bill out of the total of 90,000 ratepayers in those counties. In spite of all the canvassing of the United Kingdom Alliance, only 23,000 have voted for giving the ratepayers power to decide the number of licences, and only 19,000 have voted for absolute prohibition. The hon. Member for South Tyrone used the ingenious argument that, as Sunday prohibition had stopped drinking in Wales, therefore total prohibition will diminish the total consumption of intoxicating liquors. I am not sure that that argument is sound. Certainly the premiss is doubtful, to begin with. I do not wish to dogmatise. I will not assert that Sunday closing has increased drinking, but it would be equally rash to say that it has diminished it. The Report of the Commission seemed to show that where the population are inclined to temperance, there Sunday closing has been of avail; and where the population are not inclined to temperance, there Sunday closing has done harm. Do hon. Members suppose that the passing of the Bill would incline people to temperance who are not already so inclined? Do you think that by closing the houses you can incline people to temperance? The people who have good intentions in that direction are the people who are independent of legislation. The persons who would welcome the Bill are the very persons who can do without it. The account given by the Commissioners of what I may call the fraudulent drinking on Sundays in such towns as Cardiff and Swansea, and of the amount of systematic drinking Sunday closing induced, makes me feel that I should be reluctant to introduce similar evils into rural districts where there is a considerable mining population. Much, therefore, as I wish to assist any well-considered experiment in the hope of putting down the evils of intemperance, I do not feel, nor do those who think with me upon this Bench feel, that the measure before the House offers such a prospect of success as would justify us in voting for the Second Reading.

(4.5.) MR. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne): The right hon. Gentleman seems to me, judging from his concluding remarks, to have entirely misapprehended the scope and significance of the Bill. Of course, if a population were not inclined to temperance, the powers given to a two-thirds majority under the Bill would not be exercised. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the five counties, in which only 19,000 out of 90,000 ratepayers voted for prohibition. Then, why does the right hon. Gentleman object to the Bill, because in those five counties prohibition could not have been carried? These remarks of his show how little he grasped the scope of the measure. As to Maine and Vermont, the right hon. Gentleman's statements were very extraordinary. He referred to the last official Reports received from the Representatives of Great Britain in the United States. From these Reports I find that in Vermont, where prohibition was adopted in 1852, intemperance is held to have decreased. In Maine prohibition has been in operation for over 40 years, and the results are regarded as so satisfactory by prohibitionists that there is no movement for the repeal of the law. The right hon. Gentleman omitted to mention other States where prohibition had been a distinct success, such, for instance, as Alabama. Our Vice Consul there has testified to that success.

Massachusetts, which first adopted prohibition, had indeed since rescinded it, but it remains a local option State; and they have the power there of passing two of the Resolutions out of the three enumerated in the Bill before the House. The right hon. Gentleman denounced as insincere and irrational the attempt to deal merely with the sale and not with the use of intoxicating liquors. But we do not desire to give powers of such scope to a two-thirds majority, because the experiment might fail. The proposal of the Bill is the only effective way in which popular control over licensed houses can be exercised. All Parties have agreed that it is necessary to place licensing powers under Parliamentary control, and those who support the Bill add the supplementary proposition that it is only effective control when a decisive majority in the community are given the power of saying "yes" or "no" to the Resolutions contained in the Bill. All the talk of the tyranny exercised by majorities is beside the mark. Whether the popular control is exercised through a Municipal Council in towns, or through a County Council, or through a Licensing Committee—however the control of licensed houses is vested in an elected body—the majority of the electors, practically, are given the power of suppressing public houses altogether. Nothing can hinder a majority from saying, "We will vote for no man as a member of the Licensing Body who will not vote for the total suppression of licensed houses." So far, then, from that point of view raising an objection to the Bill, it is rather a recommendation to it, for the Bill requires a two-thirds majority, and not a bare majority merely, to vote suppression. Hence all the taunts and reproaches that have been applied to the supporters of the Bill of allowing the mere majority to tyrannise over the minority are entirely beside the mark as a criticism of the proposal. Whether we have Municipal Bodies or Special Licensing Bodies to be the instrument through which popular control over licensed houses is to be exercised is, I think, a far less important matter than that there should be no mistake—and this is my justification for the Bill—in the minds of those who work the measure as to what is the true direction of the popular will. The sole question, then, is how we can secure with the least embarrassment to other local interests the expression of the popular will on those two great matters of reducing the number of licensed houses and of total suppression—whether the popular will on this matter, which goes to the very root of social life, shall be expressed indirectly at second hand through a representative body who have to deal with all sorts of general questions of local government and all sorts of personal issues, or whether the question shall be answered and decided upon plain issues of principle, and that alone. That, then, is the case which I make for the Bill, and I believe the more it is considered the more unanswerable it will be found to be. I have always held it for certain that the moment the temperance movement acquires a certain momentum and as soon as we have adopted a widely-extended franchise there will be no settlement of the question until we resort to a Bill of this kind giving to localities, with proper supervision and safeguards, the right of saying "aye" or "nay," whether they will have licensed houses at all in their midst, or how many they will have. I urge this point on the attention of the House because I know there are some hon. Members who are rather shocked at what is undoubtedly in some respects a new piece of machinery in our political system. Yet the principle is not entirely new, because now a poll of the ratepayers is necessary to the adoption of the Libraries Act and for other purposes. It may be said that it is done in those cases because the money of the ratepayers is involved; but it seems to me that it would be quite as legitimate and reasonable to take the feeling of the people by poll in a question of this kind, which quite as much affects the healthiness of social life as the expenditure of rates and taxes. It has been contended that we ought to make our Municipal Bodies as important as we can, and that, having elected men in whose general character and capacity we have confidence, we ought to leave it to them to settle how many licensed houses there shall be in a district, or whether there shall be any. But it is exactly in the best interests of municipal government that I believe we should be wise in sparing them in their elections from a question so full of perturbing, passionate, and confusing elements as this, and I contend that we should be all the more likely to obtain desirable and capable representatives on our Local Bodies if we kept the elections free from all the excitement of a licence or no licence ticket. On that point, at least, we might defer to American experience, for it has been found there, wherever a Municipal Body is the licensing power, that all the issues in an election are subordinate to the one of a licence or no licence ticket. For my own part, therefore, I think we could do nothing worse than mix up great questions of local government in a particular locality with the question of "aye" or "nay" on a temperance or licensed victuallers' ticket, for it would deal a deadly blow at the healthiness of municipal government. I do not think there is much force in the objection that the machinery of the Bill, the taking of the polls, would involve considerable cost to the ratepayers, nor in the objection urged against the Bill last year by the President of the Local Government Board, that if it were adopted it would lead to a great and violent reaction. I see no reason whatever to suppose that such a result would follow. I remember very well that in the Debate on a Local Option Resolution in 1883, Mr. Caine mentioned a case in which, in the City of Liverpool, a poll was taken on the water question: 38,300 votes were recorded, and the cost was less than £1,000. Again, a poll taken in the Wandsworth Union, the population in which is 210,000, cost only £280. Therefore, the cost of polling cannot be put forward as a serious argument. Now, something has been said about landlords having the power to suppress the sale of drink at their own absolute will and pleasure. But I do not think the force of this argument is fully understood by certain hon. Members opposite. It has been pointed out that the Duke of Westminster said, in a speech quoted by the hon. Member who moved the Bill, that he had suppressed 37 out of 48 licensed houses on his property, and he was loudly applauded for doing so. But do hon. Members see the position in which they place themselves by approving that action and yet objecting to the Bill? Their position is this: that a landlord might abolish licensed houses on his property, though the people who live on it do not wish it; but the people themselves who do wish it are to be denied the opportunity. I am aware that the introduction of the *referendum* is a novelty, and I am prepared to argue it on its own merits if this were the proper occasion for doing so; but this is not an occasion for a discussion as to whether or not it is well to refer back questions from the Legislature to the Electoral Bodies. But it is worth while, perhaps, to point out the success of this instrument for testing public opinion in Switzerland. The practice there of submitting important issues of local government to the corrective votes of the citizens of a particular Canton is said to have taken root in the country, and no one thinks of abolishing it. I should like to read to the House what is the testimony of Sir F. Adams, the British Minister at Berne, on this subject of the *referendum*. He said—

> "As to the moral effect which the exercise of this institution has had upon the people, we are assured that it is admitted to be salutary even by adversaries of democratic government. The consciousness of individual influence, as well as the national feeling, is declared to have been strengthened; and the fact of a large and, on several occasions, increased participation of the people in the vote is quoted as tending to prove that their interest in political questions is growing keener. The application of the *referendum* as worked in Switzerland, and the issues raised by it are so easy to understand, and, in most cases, at all events, are so independent of Party manœuvres, that public opinion acquiesces at once in the result, and the general feeling entertained in the country with reference to a particular question finds its accurate and, for the time, final expression."

I submit that such an experience of the working of this piece of machinery is thoroughly satisfactory, and that on that ground, at all events, no objection can be made to the Bill now before the House. The Bill has been attacked as a piece of piecemeal legislation, and a merely local measure. But then the whole history of temperance legislation in some of its most important sides has been a history of progress in local temperance measures. If I remember aright, it was in 1839 that there was first of all a partial Sunday closing in London. Then three or four large boroughs outside, like Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Newcastle, also adopted partial closing. It was, I think, in 1848 that there was partial Sunday closing in England and Wales generally. Then, in 1853, we had complete Sunday closing in Scotland, and in

1878 it was extended to Ireland, with the exception of the five exempted towns. In temperance legislation we have gone on in this way step by step, and from locality to locality. That Wales desires this there can be no dispute, because we have not yet heard one single Welsh Member oppose the Bill, and I do not expect that we shall. The Member for Shropshire on this and on other occasions has claimed to speak for Welshmen, but his views seem to be repudiated almost with unanimity by the electoral majority in Wales. In voting for the Bill I confine my support of it to the principle, and I leave myself absolutely free as to the conditions, the machinery, the details, with which that principle is to be applied. I find, for example, that the majority required for the admittedly strong step of prohibition is a two-thirds majority "of those who vote." I think the noble Lord the Member for South Paddington was far wiser when he required for the prohibitive veto a majority of two-thirds "of all the ratepayers on the register." It would not be at all fruitful or safe to force prohibition with less than the support of two-thirds or three-fourths of the total number of persons entitled to vote. But these and other objections can be dealt with in Committee. In supporting this Bill I am supporting nothing but the proposition that the direct vote of the inhabitants of a district taken upon the question whether they will have licensed houses in their midst, and, if so, how many, is the only practical way of securing for the small householder the same protection against the drink traffic as is possessed by the owners of large landed estates. I do not argue the Bill on the physiological ground that some authorities believe alcohol to be injurious to the human constitution. I do not argue either on the moral and social ground of the miseries inflicted by excessive drinking on human character and on human society. Whether alcohol is or is not injurious to bodily health, whether excessive drinking is or is not at the root of half the woes of our social life, whether a restriction of licensed houses would or would not make a deep mark on the social habits of our people I do not ask, and it is not the question to-day. The question to-day is a political one. The House of Commons has agreed that the principle of control over drinking houses must be conceded, and the only question is, how the preponderating voice of the community for its own protection can be most faithfully expressed. The hon. Member for South Tyrone made an eloquent appeal to the House not to throw out the Bill and thus reject its principle. It will be much to be regretted if that appeal falls on deaf ears. The time has gone by for flattering phrases and pious opinions about temperance reform. Let it not be forgotten that there are 1,000 or more estates and parishes in England and Wales which have been cleared of licensed houses by great proprietors. The small freeholder calls for the right to secure for himself the same protection. The workman and the small freeholder have just as much repugnance to the proximity of the public house as any Member of this House has. I have always said that the temperance movement is by far the greatest and the deepest moral movement in this country since the anti-slavery agitation. Twice this Parliament has felt the force of that movement, and those who go to large meetings of our countrymen, which are so efficacious for testing and instructing public opinion, and for feeling and quickening the pulse of the electors, are well aware that few notes command a response so instantaneous and so hearty as a reference to intemperance. We are all talking, some of us rather vaguely, about social reform, but I venture to say that all practical projects of social reform taken together would not do half as much for improving the material prosperity of the country and the well-being of our countrymen as the progress of the temperance cause. Yes, and it is because I am persuaded that we can only effectually promote this cause by the present measure, or a measure of this kind, because I am persuaded that by putting this potent instrument into the hands of the people themselves, we shall take a further step than has yet been taken for securing temperance reform, I shall vote for the Second Reading of the Bill.

(4.43.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon): As a Member of the Committee which organised the *plébiscite*, I should like to re-assure the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary as to the origin of that undertaking. The United Kingdom Alliance had nothing whatever to do with it. Again, the right hon. Gentleman said that out of 90,000 householders in five counties only 23,000 voted in favour of the Bill; but the explanation of that is that the *plébiscite* was only taken in specific localities, although they were typical localities. In my own constituency Political Parties are very evenly balanced, yet there, and in the boroughs, which are deemed to be the Conservative stronghold, the voting was very largely in favour of the Bill. Every precaution was taken that a fair vote should be secured. The chairman of the committee who organised the *plébiscite* was a gentleman who took a prominent part in opposing my candidature for this House, and one of the three gentlemen responsible for the accuracy of the figures was at one time Unionist Member for the constituency. The right hon. Gentleman professed to doubt the existence of a preponderating sentiment in Wales with regard to temperance, and the hon. Member for Shropshire doubted the existence of such a place as Wales, in the same way as the Postmaster General the other day doubted the existence of such a people as the Welsh people. If that goes on we shall have reason to become somewhat sceptical of the existence of a Tory Party in that country at all. The attitude of hon. Gentlemen opposite and of the Government on this question affords a strange contrast to that which they took up in regard to the tithe question. They said it was necessary to deal with the tithe question because of the scenes of disorder which occurred in Wales arising out of the collection of tithes; but the amount of disorder that arises in connection with tithes is as nothing compared to the disorder that arises in connection with public houses. Yet the tithe question was regarded as so urgent that Session after Session a Tithe Bill was brought in. And on this point every possible obstacle is put in the way of our discussing it. I hope that the temperance party in Wales will take note of that fact at the next election. We are all agreed that there is an excess of public houses. Figures that can be quoted conclusively show that the number of public houses in Wales is excessive—in many districts grossly excessive—yet the population of such districts is powerless in the matter. I think that a Bill once introduced into this House fixed as a proper standard one public house for every 1,500 inhabitants, two for 3,000, and an extra one for every additional 1,000 persons. Yet in one Welsh town of 1,200 inhabitants there are no fewer than nine licensed houses; and in Bangor there are eight times as many as there should be on the basis I have laid down. According to the present law, the Magistrates are entitled to have regard to the requirements of the district. In some recent cases in which I was concerned, applications were made for the renewal of licences; a *plébiscite* in the locality had been obtained as to whether these licences should be renewed, and two-thirds of the population were against the renewal; yet the Magistrates granted the renewals. This was a *reductio ad absurdum*, and it is to meet such cases as these that this Bill has been introduced. It provides machinery for obtaining evidence as to the requirements of the locality and making the Magistrates act upon such evidence. I implore the House to pass this Bill, which will give to the inhabitants of a district the power of removing from their midst, if they so desire, the contaminating influence of the public house. This is a great and momentous social question which touches the very root and fabric of society. I believe that there is a growing demand for a measure like this, and that when the time comes—as soon it will—for the nation to give its verdict upon the question, that verdict will be that the people will no longer allow their intellects to be enfeebled and their moral senses to be blunted by the demoralising influence of strong drink.

*(4.58.) SIR E. HAMLEY (Birkenhead): There is no doubt that a revision of the Liquor Laws is greatly needed, but that it should be effected by partial and one-sided legislation like this Bill, would be very unfortunate. It ought to be dealt with by a comprehensive measure introduced by the Government after an inquiry, in which all the interests concerned are fully represented and considered; the interests of temperance, the interests of the licensed victuallers, who, as pursuing a lawful business, are entitled to the protection of the Legislature, and the interests of the community generally, who have just as much right to derive their comforts from the public house as the teetotalers

have to obtain theirs from the teapot or the pump. If the matter were taken up in that spirit we might hope to have a measure which would conciliate all interests and possess the inestimable advantage of being applicable to the whole country instead of a particular locality. As to the notion that the habits of our lives ought to be controlled by *plébiscites*, that would lead to an intolerable tyranny such as I hope the people of this Kingdom will never submit to, even though it should be recommended by those who call themselves Liberals, or by any other nickname. One advantage of the Government dealing comprehensively with this subject would be that this House would be relieved from these perpetual demands upon its time, and another that it would remove a permanent cause of irritation and ill-will in every constituency. Every Member of this House must be conscious that there is no subject which produces such bad feeling in a constituency as this liquor question, which in a great measure is due to the fact that the advocates of temperance, strong in the goodness of their cause, and justly strong, are very apt to deal with it in a spirit regardless of everybody's feelings but their own. It is because a measure like this Bill would put fresh difficulties in the way of a comprehensive Government proposal, and would thus be hostile to the true interests of temperance, that I shall vote against the Second Reading of this Bill.

(5.2.) MR. J. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick): I avail myself of the opportunity of stating the reason why I support this Bill. I do so in conformity with the attitude I took up when I was elected for the constituency I represent, an attitude which by temperance men and by the trade was declared to be sound and satisfactory. Like the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Newcastle I accept the Second Reading of this Bill as a declaration in favour of the principle that there should be a direct reference to the inhabitants of a locality of the question whether there shall be fresh licences, a reduction of licences, or no licences at all. In that question I have Scotland in my mind as well as Wales; the principle is as applicable in the one country as in the other. When, however, we get into Committee on the Bill, we shall find ourselves confronted with various difficulties, as to which, in voting for the Second Reading, we shall be in no sense committed to an opinion. There will arise the question of compensation. We have sanctioned and encouraged the investment of men's capital in a business, and we cannot, in justice, and in the absence of misbehaviour on the part of the holder of a licence, in a moment deprive him of this invested capital, simply because we have changed our minds on a matter of general policy. I do not say that such compensation should come from Imperial or from local sources; it might come from the revenue derived from the issue of licences, which stands upon a wholly different footing from the proceeds of other forms of taxation. By increasing the cost of licences a fund could be formed for such compensation. Another form of compensation would be by time—by giving to a licencee the time to work out the value attaching to the licence he holds. I do not want to enter into the question of legal rights; but there is a question of moral right which impresses itself on my mind, and must impress the minds of all who consider this question fairly. If you do not acknowledge this moral claim you will make such a Bill unworkable, as being repugnant to the sense of justice of every man who fairly considers the subject.

*(5.5.) COLONEL HUGHES (Woolwich): This is a step in legislation directed against one particular trade; but I do not know that the arguments supporting it may not be used in reference to many trades. Take, for instance, the trade or profession of a solicitor. The licence for a solicitor to practise is annually renewed during good behaviour. It is not difficult to prove that litigation in excessive quantities is injurious to the community. One of the features in Jack Cade's programme of reform was first to kill all the lawyers; the reformers of the present day wish to kill the trade of the publicans. If the number of licensed victuallers is too large, and if their houses are open too long, then reduce the number of houses and shorten the hours; but let it be done with fairness, and let any legitimate trader be compensated when he is required to give up his business in what is supposed to be the general interest. In my love for temperance I am not going to be led away into doing an injustice to any

man. I am sure no one who supports this Bill will argue that when the number of solicitors in a district is supposed to be in excess of requirements their certificates shall be withdrawn; but let those who vote for an arrangement in which one particular trade is concerned have regard to a general application of the principle which may come home to those who least expect it. It is a principle I cannot agree with, and therefore I shall vote against the Bill.

*(5.7.) MR. COGHILL (Newcastle-under-Lyme): Speaking as a teetotaler of 13 years' standing, I give a cordial support to the Bill. The control of the issue of new licences has been admitted by the Government in their licensing proposals, by which the issue of such licences was to be suspended. We need not go far beyond the precincts of this House to find that the number of licensed houses is far in excess of requirements. We have nothing to expect from the action of Magistrates in this matter. Very recently there was an instance reported in the Press of how the Justices fail to recognise the local opinion in connection with licences. The Kensington Board were petitioned, and strong representations were made to them against the issue of a licence for a house on the ground that the existing number of houses was excessive, and the particular application was for a house opposite the workhouse, and where it would be a continual source of temptation to the inmates when out of the workhouse. The Chairman declined to refuse a licence because, to use his words, "A few old women could not resist temptation." When it was pointed out that there were a large number of old women, still he said he did not care though they were hundreds. There is not much, then, to expect from the action of Magistrates. We have been told of the tyranny of this proposal, but I assert that it is an application of the true principles of Liberty that when the inhabitants of a locality find in their midst more public houses than should be there, then the opinion of the majority should prevail against the tyranny of an influential minority. We wish to secure freedom from the caprice of Magistrates and the dictation of brewers and publicans, and protection from the evil of intemperance in our midst.

(5.10.) The House divided:—Ayes 185; Noes 179.—(Div. List, No. 91.)

Main Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.—(No. 13.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(5.26.) MR. W. ABRAHAM (Glamorgan, Rhondda): It is a source of very great disappointment to many Members in the House, and more so to the mining population throughout the country, that no time has been allowed for the discussion of the Second Reading of this most important matter. Reserving, then, our observations for another occasion, I now content myself with asking the House to give the Bill a Second Reading.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*Mr. W. Abraham.*)

(5.26.) MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): At such an hour as this the only course open is to move the Adjournment of the Debate.

Debate adjourned till Wednesday, 15th April.

COUNTY COUNCILLORS' DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 90.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

(5.29.) MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I should like to point out what are the provisions of this Bill. The present law provides that our local representatives shall have no interest whatever in the contracts made by the bodies of which they are members. This Bill gives power to County Councillors to make contracts with their own County Councils for the supply of stone and gravel for the maintenance of roads in their districts.

It being half an hour after Five of the clock, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN BILL.

(No. 216.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I beg to move, Mr. Courtney, that you do report Progress.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): The Bill has the support of Members in all quarters of the House, and there is no reason why it should be opposed.

MR. KNOX: I agree that the Bill is absolutely non-contentious, but so was a Bill of mine that was first objected to by an hon. Member opposite.

SIR R. WEBSTER: The measure is much desired by all classes.

MR. KNOX: The Bill of which I have custody is also much desired by all classes.

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No. 240.)

THIRD READING.

Order for Third Reading read.

*SIR J. POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): I had an Amendment on the Paper with the object of effecting such a change in the law as will enable Marine officers to sit on Courts Martial to try Marines for offences committed when afloat. There is a great deal of interest felt in this question in many quarters, and I trust the Government will be able to give me an assurance that the matter I refer to will not be lost sight of.

*(5.35.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I was unable to be present on the last occasion when this subject was referred to, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary for War was good enough to answer for me. A good many naval officers object to the proposed change, but I, personally, cannot see why the change should not be made, and I will undertake to consider the matter and propose an Amendment to the Naval Discipline Act this Session or next, with the object of carrying it out. That Act is one which it is desirable for many reasons to alter as seldom as possible, and I cannot undertake that the matter in question will be dealt with this Session. Under any circumstances, however, it will not be lost sight of next Session.

(5.36.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I trust the hon. Member for Kilkenny will remain satisfied with the assurance he has received from the noble Lord, particularly as the question does not properly arise under this Bill.

SIR J. POPE HENNESSY: I am perfectly satisfied with the assurance of the noble Lord.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

PUBLIC BODIES (PROVISIONAL ORDERS) BILL.—(No. 233.)

As amended, considered; read the third time, and passed.

SOLICITORS AND APPRENTICES (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 87.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Friday, 10th April.

REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS (ACCELERATION) BILL.—(No. 105.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LAND (IRELAND) BILL.—(No. 66.)

Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow.

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE.

Eighth Report brought up, and read; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

MOTION.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND CHARGES BILL.

On Motion of Mr. Jackson, Bill to amend certain provisions of the Law with respect to money charged on or payable out of the Consolidated Fund and with respect to Public Accounts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jackson and Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 252.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Six o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 19th March, 1891.

PUBLIC BODIES (PROVISIONAL ORDERS) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be printed. (No. 74.)

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1.) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be read 2ª to-morrow; and Standing Order No. XXXIX. to be considered in order to its being dispensed with.—(*The Marquess of Salisbury.*)

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.

Brought from the Commons; read 1ª; and to be printed; and to be read 2ª to-morrow; and Standing Orders No. XXXIX. and XLV. to be considered in order to their being dispensed with.—(*The Earl Brownlow.*) (No. 75.)

BORROWING (INFANTS) BILL [H.L.]

(No. 44.)

SECOND READING.

Order of the Day for the Second Reading, read.

LORD HERSCHELL: My Lords, in moving the Second Reading of this Bill I need not trouble your Lordships with any observations upon its general object, or about the provisions contained in the first clause of it, because those are matters which were considered when I moved some days ago the Second Reading of the Bill relating to the sending of circulars to persons under age inciting to betting. The first clause of this Bill is framed on the same lines as the Bill to which your Lordships have already given a Second Reading, and I apprehend I need say nothing further upon it. But, my Lords, the Bill contains two clauses to which I ought to call your attention. Experience has shown that one of the means which those who encourage and induce borrowing by those under age have adopted in order to get their victims as completely as possible within their power is this, that they suggest to the youth that he should make a statutory declaration, or make an affidavit stating that he is of age. The object of getting this done is not really to afford any assurance to the lender; he of course has ample means by which he could satisfy himself if he so desired whether the youth was of age or not before he entered upon the transaction; the purpose for which he obtains the statutory declaration or affidavit is quite different; he represents it commonly as a mere form. It is not regarded by the infant who makes the declaration as in the slightest degree deceiving the person to whom he gives it, for he is told it is a mere matter of form, and for no object. But when it is obtained it is used by the lender in this way—that if he cannot obtain payment of the money which he has lent from the borrowing infant himself, or from his relations, he at once indulges in threats; points out that a statutory declaration has been made which is false, and that unless some settlement is come to, the youth will find himself in the Police Court charged with a criminal offence. Now, I am not speaking of an imaginary case, I am merely referring to cases of which many have come before the Courts, and I have every reason to believe that the cases are very numerous in which this device has been resorted to. I have, therefore, thought it expedient to meet this device in some way or other, which will prevent its being resorted to in future; to prevent its being taken advantage of in the way it has been in the past as a most tremendous engine for extorting money from the relatives of the person to whom the loans have been made. It was a matter of considerable difficulty, because as your Lordships will see, there is no doubt in such cases as those that an offence has been committed against the law; but a suggestion has been made, which I think will meet the case. As I have said, the application for a statutory declaration is not made for any legitimate purpose, and I think, having regard to one's experience as to the mode in which this engine has been used, that it is perfectly legitimate to make it an offence in a person to induce the giving of a statutory declaration or the making of an affidavit in connection with or for the purpose of a loan by an infant. If this clause should pass into law it will operate in this way, that if the money lender is in the position to say to his victim, "You will find yourself in the Criminal Court unless the money is paid to me," if such a provision as this passes into law there will be a most effective answer to such a statement or threat as that, namely, that the money lender may find himself in the very difficulty in which he wishes to place his victim. And I cannot but think that a provision of this sort, whilst it is a perfectly legitimate one, will afford infants protection against statutory declaration and affidavits being obtained under such circumstances as I have stated to your Lordships. It seems to me it would prevent their being obtained and used as a means of extortion by money lenders. The other provision is one in which I have endeavoured to carry out a suggestion which was made by the noble Marquess opposite. It deals with a matter of great difficulty. There is, of course, no difficulty in declaring that a loan which, when contracted by the infant, is void, shall not be made valid merely by an acknowledgment or promise to pay after the infant becomes of age; but the difficulty arises from this, that the transaction would not under ordinary circumstances be carried out in that way at all, even if you were to prohibit and render ineffective such an acknowledgment or promise, because it would always be connected with some new transaction. We will suppose that a debt had been contracted by an infant which had run up to a large sum and which was void and could not be validated really by any subsequent acknowledgment or promise; there would be a new transaction of this description—the money lender would advance another sum, smaller or greater (a small sum would be quite sufficient), and then he would obtain from the person who had been an infant, when he came of age, a promissory note or negotiable instrument, including both the former debt and the new advance; and, of course, as there would have been a consideration for that new agreement, that consideration would make the whole thing valid, even though the consideration for the new agreement was extremely small. If, for example, there had been a debt of, say £900, contracted by the infant, and there were a new advance of £10 only, that would be a perfectly valid and binding agreement to pay; or if a promissory note were given for £910 that promissory note would be valid, even although the new consideration given after the infant obtained majority only amounted to that small sum. This difficulty can only be met by making any negotiable instrument, after the infant comes of age, void to any extent in respect to which it is given for an old loan, and valid only to the extent to which it is given for the new advance. I do not think there is anything which would run counter to principle in making that provision; so that although the agreement on the face of it is a single one, and for a single sum, you would be allowed to inquire into the consideration given for it, and so get rid of the promissory note or agreement, in so far as the sum covered by it represented merely a loan made during the time of infancy, which was void in point of law. So far I do not suppose there could be much question or controversy. But then this difficulty arises. Supposing a promissory note to be given which you make void to the extent to which it represents what I will call the infant loan, but not for the new advance, against whom are you to make it so void? Of course there is no difficulty in making it void as against the person who has lent the money, but if you were to leave it valid if in the hands of what is called "a *bonâ fide* holder for value" it is obvious that the effect of this provision could be easily and would be evaded, because you would find these notes or negotiable instruments in the hands of a so-called "*bonâ fide* holder for value" who would be the person appearing to sue upon them, and to enforce payment of them. I say "so-called" for this reason: that it is so very easy on the one hand for a person to be put forward as a *bonâ fide* holder for value, and on the other so difficult to prove that it is not so; and if you were to allow these transactions to be valid, if an instrument is in the hands of a so-called *bonâ fide* holder for value, I think the effect of the clause would be likely to be very small indeed. Now, the question is, can those transactions be made legitimately and properly void, even when the notes are in the hands of third persons? As far as I can learn, there would be no danger in such an enactment. These Bills do not pass current; they do not get into the hands of persons who ordinarily take commercial negotiable instruments at all; and I do not believe there is any case in which a person would take a note of this description, really relying upon the name which he finds attached to the promissory note, which is that of an impecunious person who has recently been an infant; and, besides, he can always, of course, look to the person from whom he takes it—he has that security. No one need take it unless he pleases. If payment is not made, he has his remedy against the person from whom he took it, and the only effect, I believe, against a person of that description, if such a measure as this were to be passed, would be that he would be more likely to be careful in the credit he gives. The circumstances are peculiar, and the course to be taken is an exceptional one; but I believe, in a matter of this description, that steps might be taken, and that no harm would be done, while a great deal of good would be likely to be done if, in these transactions, securities of that kind, so far as they represented loans made during infancy, were made void. There is one point in connection with this clause to which I should advert. Some have thought that instead of making a note or agreement void altogether to the extent of the debt which has been contracted during infancy, it would be better to allow the person holding the security to claim the amount of any actual advance and 5 per cent. interest. I think, probably, the result of such an enactment would be much the same thing, because I think that if lenders could not in any case recover more than the amount of the actual advance and 5 per cent. interest, these transactions would cease to become profitable; while, on the other hand, it is necessary to prevent them because if these amounts could be recovered—if the money lenders could get them in only one or two out of a number of cases—that would make it worth their while to make advances in future; but, of course, if they cannot get more than the amount advanced and 5 per cent. interest, such transactions would cease to be profitable and would not be so likely to be entered into. Of course these are more matters for Committee than for discussion on Second Reading; but I have made this explanation because I have thought it the wisest and best course in the first instance, whatever may be done afterwards, to make the clause extensive and absolute, as I have made it in the Bill which I put before your Lordships. I do not think there is any other observation I need make, but I think if this measure, or any such measure as this, be passed into law it will go a long way in checking practices that have been most mischievous and most disastrous. I should like to add this, to remove a misconception which has been found to exist. From various letters which I have received from correspondents, it has been thought that these Bills refer only to youths who are at the public schools or universities, and I have been reproached rather with taking under my care what are called "swells," and with leaving out of sight infants who are not, being in different circumstances, in that happy position. That is an entire misapprehension. The Bill I have introduced to your Lordships applies to persons under age, whatever their position or rank in life may be; there is no distinction made, and it will equally apply to all persons under age, whether at public schools or at institutions of a more humble description. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Moved, "That the Bill be now read 2ª."—*(The Lord Herschell.)*

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, I have only to make my acknowledgments to the noble and learned Lord for his adoption of the suggestion which I made at an early period of this discussion. I have no doubt that the experiment he has made will be of a valuable character, and that some advantage will result from its adoption. I wish, however, to ask him whether the 2nd clause is really any very large advance on the existing law. Would not complicity in obtaining a false affidavit be punishable now? I believe the making of a false affidavit is only a misdemeanour, but still complicity on the part of the man who solicits the infant to make it, would be complicity with perjury, and, I presume, would be punishable as such. It may not be so severely punishable as under the clause in this Bill which is now introduced by the noble and learned Lord, but I should have thought that it would, at all events, be punishable under the existing law.

LORD HERSCHELL: The object of inserting it is this. Of course, if you could prove that the person had been a party to making a false affidavit or statutory declaration he would be liable, but you have affirmatively to prove that he knew it was false, and that he knew the infant was of age. That is not always so easy a thing to prove. It would be open to the person to show that the infant told him he was of age, that he did really believe that to be the fact, and that he had no reason to know that the declaration or affidavit was false; and though you might have a very strong suspicion that he was not deceived at all in the matter it is not necessarily certain that that would be provable. Under this Bill, whether he knows it or does not know it, the inciting of infant persons under age to make these affidavits or declarations is made a criminal offence. With regard to the noble Marquess's suggestion, I am not sure whether one ought not to provide that there should be reasonable grounds in the person obtaining the document for his belief, and I should propose to alter it in Committee by inserting words to provide that there must be reasonable grounds for believing that the person was of age. I quite think that the criticism of the noble Marquess is justified, and that it suggests the expediency of making an alteration in the wording of the section.

*LORD NORTON: I merely wish to express the thanks which I, and I am sure all your Lordships will feel are due to the noble and learned Lord for introducing this important Bill. Its first part was received, when introduced, with perfect unanimity, making penal inciting to betting transactions by agents with lads under age. It is one of the most dangerous practices in this country at the present moment, demoralising young men and sowing a future misery among families. The addition of this second Bill, which of course will be consolidated with the other in Committee, and the two dealt with as one Bill in this House, is received with equal applause, making penal lending money to lads under age. I am very glad, as the noble and learned Lord pointed out just now, this Bill will apply not only to those in our great public schools and universities, but throughout the kingdom. By examination in one of the great prisons in this country it was found that a large proportion of men imprisoned for thefts had begun their vicious course of life by gambling on a small scale when they were young. It is exactly that danger of the taste for gambling being sown among young men of all classes in this country that we ought to provide against. I would only add, with regard to the idea prevalent in the minds of some people that gambling is not so extensive as it was formerly, there is not the slightest doubt that at the present moment the vice of gambling is pervading all classes in this country from the lowest to the highest, and I trust that the Bill of the noble and learned Lord may have the good effect intended.

On Question, agreed to.

Bill read 2ª.

LORD HERSCHELL: I beg to give notice that on going into Committee I shall move that this and the other Bill be consolidated.

Bill committed to a Committee of the Whole House.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) BILL [H.L.].—(No. 17.)

Amendment reported (according to order); and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

CLERGY DISCIPLINE (IMMORALITY) BILL [H.L.].—(No. 68.)

On Report of Amendments,

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, I have an Amendment to propose in Clause 10. The Amendment arose during the discussion on Second Reading. It is to insert, in page 5, line 23, after the word "Chancellor," the words—

> "Is not or has not been for at least five years the holder of a judicial appointment or."

It will then read—

> "Where the Chancellor is not or has not been for at least five years the holder of a judicial appointment, or has not been a barrister who is in actual practice for not less than 10 years."

In this and in the other cases mentioned, then a Deputy Chancellor shall be appointed.

LORD HERSCHELL: I am not quite sure whether this entirely carries out what was intended. It was intended only to include Chairmen of Quarter Sessions, and it was intended in that case to provide that the Chairman should be a barrister of not less than 10 years' actual practice. I think it might give rise to some criticism if all Chairmen of Quarter Sessions were necessarily brought within the clause, and I would suggest that it should read thus: "Is not a barrister who has been less than five years holding a judicial appointment."

*LORD GRIMTHORPE: I may say that was quite my understanding of what was agreed to during the discussion in Committee on the clause.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Is it not rather an invidious distinction to distinguish other barristers from those who are in actual practice? I do not know whether there is any distinction made in Courts of Law. Does it involve having held briefs?

LORD HERSCHELL: I should be sorry to attempt to draw the line between barristers who are in actual practice and barristers who are not, though in some cases the line would be easily enough drawn, no doubt; but I may point out that it is an expression which is frequently used in Acts of Parliament.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: So that it must have a meaning.

LORD HERSCHELL: I think it must have a meaning, and, as I have said, the meaning may be perfectly easy to give to it in particular cases. I quite admit there may be some cases on the border line which would make it difficult to say whether a barrister was in actual practice, but I think nobody would say that a barrister who had never held a brief was in actual practice.

Amendment agreed to.

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: Then in Clause 26 I have an Amendment in order to define the words "judicial appointment," and to limit it thus. It is at page 13, line 31, at the end of the line, to insert—

> "The expression judicial appointment shall include a Chairmanship of Quarter Sessions and a Police or Stipendiary Magistrateship."

Amendment agreed to.

Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

POLLEN FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.
(No. 69.)

Amendments reported (according to order); and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.
(No. 62.)

Order of the Day for the House to be put into Committee, read.

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: My Lords, before the House resolves itself into Committee I should like to ask my noble and learned Friend to tell us why it is necessary to push this Bill on with such haste. It involves several questions which are of interest to County Councils which are not very clear, and which they have not had the opportunity of considering. This Bill was read a second time in the House last Monday. I am not at all sure that the Bill was in print when it was read a second time; but if it was, it certainly was only to be had in the House. It was not circulated among Members until Tuesday, and my noble and learned Friend proposed its passing through Committee on that day; but in deference to the representations made to him, he acceded to the request to postpone the Bill until to-day. On looking into the Bill I must say I think we ought to have further time for considering it, unless the noble Lord is prepared to say that there is some very urgent reason why the Bill should be passed now. The Bill as introduced in the House of Commons consisted only of the 1st clause—I may say the Bill consisted only of sub-sections A and B of the 1st clause. I do not think there would be any objection to passing it now were that all. Sub-section 2 of Section 1, however, appears to raise one very difficult question. As regards Section 2, part of it is unnecessary and the other part is objectionable; the second paragraph of Section 2 also is difficult to construe, but it is, as far as I can understand it, an objectionable provision. There are several other matters to which I might refer, but I will not say anything more on these different provisions, because, if we are to go into Committee on the Bill, the particular points which may be objected to had best be raised in

Committee; but I would ask my noble and learned Friend, unless there is some very special and urgent reason for pushing this Bill on with such haste, whether he would consent to postpone it so as to give your Lordships in this House, and members of County Councils, an opportunity of considering its provisions?

*LORD THRING: My Lords, the fact that this Bill was likely to be opposed in this House came upon me, and upon the supporters of the Bill, as an entire surprise. The Bill was passed unanimously in the House of Commons. No objection whatever was raised to it. The Bill was approved by the Local Government Board, and, in fact, the 2nd clause of the Bill was drawn by the authorities at the Local Government Board. I understand that both sides in the House of Commons were unanimous in assenting to the Bill. With respect to the necessity for hurry in the matter, there really is very great necessity for it. A question has been raised whether, if this Bill is not passed before the close of the present financial year, it would be lawful for the County Councils to carry over the sums which were appropriated for the purpose of technical education—whether it would be necessary to carry them over to a general account. There are very few County Councils in England who have decided yet how they will apply this money. The whole object of this clause is to provide that where the question of the application of the sums for purposes of technical education is under consideration, it shall not be necessary to carry them over to a general account. If this Bill does not pass before the Vacation, it will be supposed to be necessary that these moneys should be so carried over, and therefore the whole purpose of the provisions relating to technical education will be absolutely frustrated.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: My Lords, I can bear my testimony to the accuracy of what has fallen from the noble Lord with regard to the necessity of passing this Bill at once, because if it be not passed, it is, I understand, the view of the Government that these moneys will be carried over and will be distributed under Section 23 of the Act of 1888, and the effect will be that the use of them for the purpose of technical education in the present year will be in the main lost. But it is not only important to pass this Bill as speedily as may be for that purpose. The 1st clause is of great importance, and, though I do not mean to say there is the same absolute urgency with regard to that clause as in respect to the others, I do say that the power there given to establish scholarships, and especially in institutions which are not within the administrative district of the particular County Council, is one of great importance. It is certainly of great importance in Yorkshire. No doubt the noble Lord opposite will confirm me in saying that it is of equal importance in Lancashire. It seems to me that these scholarships are the best mode of dealing with a large portion of these funds, and County Councils can do nothing until they know whether Parliament will give them power to establish them.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Viscount CROSS): My Lords, the reason for passing this Bill has been so clearly explained by the noble Marquess who has just sat down that I do not think it is necessary for me to trouble your Lordships further than to say that those risks have been considered by Her Majesty's Government, and they are unanimously of opinion that this Bill ought to pass at once, as proposed by the noble and learned Lord.

(House in Committee.)

Clause 1.

*LORD LINGEN: I think, my Lords, the declaratory part of paragraph 2 here enunciates a somewhat new principle, and a rather dangerous one, that in considering the eligibility of a school for support, you ought to consider its needs independently and separately, or at any rate in addition to the question of efficiency. I am afraid this clause very often will be read as meaning that although a school is not efficient, yet, that being needy, it is entitled to assistance. That hitherto has not been the view taken of the meaning of public aid being given, and I do not think it should be suddenly adopted as the principle on which public aid should be given to schools. At present the discretion of the County Councils is quite unlimited. If they see fit to give assistance on the ground of need they can do so, but I think the suggestion of such a ground of assistance in an Act of Parliament is likely to lead to results which will not be altogether favourable to technical education. I would therefore venture to submit to your Lordships that Sub-section 2 of Section 1 in the Bill be omitted.

*LORD THRING: My Lords, I admit that at first sight this clause does appear to give rise to some observation; but it is, in fact, a necessary clause, and I think your Lordships will see why it is inserted. The Technical Education Act provides that the aid is to be given precisely and exactly in proportion to the merits of the schools themselves. In the case of these county schools, your Lordships will easily understand that what the counties want is to have schools in different parts of the counties. They cannot be content with a school at one corner only, but they want to distribute the aid as far as possible. The whole meaning of this clause is that where the County Authority see that they want a school in a particular part of the county, if that school cannot exist without the aid of a grant, and by the aid of a grant might be made an efficient school for the purpose of technical education, they may give a grant to that school, although it is not quite so good a one as other schools in other parts of the county. It is, in fact, a provision to give the Councils a freer hand in the selection of the schools to which they may give aid.

LORD MONK-BRETTON: The explanation which the noble Lord has given is very good; but there is no limit in the section. The aid may be given, as the section now reads, to a school in any part of England.

*LORD BASING: My objection to this clause is that it seems to limit the power of the County Council Authority to what they can already do. Why should they be limited in regard to the poverty or wealth of a particular school? It does not follow that they should distribute money through agency of the schools at all, and they might consider it preferable to do something else with it. I do not see how the noble Lord can say that this section is necessary, or that such application of the money is not within the competency of the County Councils.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: I should venture to ask the noble Lord whether this discussion does not show that it would be very desirable to adopt another word instead of "needs." The two noble Lords who have spoken have construed that word as meaning neediness, and my noble Friend himself contends for the necessity of aiding a school in the particular locality where the school may happen to exist. If that reading be the right one, I think some wording should be adopted to show that pecuniary neediness is not a ground for obtaining the larger grant.

*LORD LINGEN: The noble Earl has adverted to a point which contains the principle to be kept in view. It is one thing to say that a school is needy, and another that a school is needed. A school that is needed ought to be created or assisted, but a school ought not to be assisted simply because it is needy. I would point out here that the word is "needs," not "need;" if it was in the singular there would be no objection.

LORD HERSCHELL: This is not a compulsory clause at all. It is a power given to the County Councils. If you cannot trust your County Councils to that extent, that is to say that they cannot be trusted not to give the money simply because the school needs it, though there may be no need for the school, then it is necessary no doubt to impose some restriction upon them. But what I would point out is, that this clause imposes no obligation upon them at all. They are to do the best they can for carrying out technical education. All it says is that they may take certain things into consideration, and in the case of a school which down to that time has not been an efficient school, but which may be made an efficient school by the grant of aid, and which will be for the benefit of the county, I cannot see any reason why the County Council should not be allowed to do something for that school.

*VISCOUNT CROSS: I do not see any objection to the clause as it stands. The practice seems to be nowadays to create a Local Authority, and immediately afterwards to distrust it. But my impression is that having created the Local Authority, you ought to give them power to deal with the matters which come before them. This is simply a permissive power, and I think we ought to trust them to exercise that power properly, believing that they will do so to the best of their judgment.

*LORD MONK BRETTON: I entirely agree with the noble Lord who has just sat down that we ought to trust the County Councils, and for that reason I object to the sub-section. I wish to see it left out. There is nothing as the law stands to prevent the County Council from making a grant under circumstances in which they consider a grant is required; but to introduce a clause of this kind, expressly stating that the Local Authority may consider, not the efficiency of the school, or the requirements of the pupils, but the necessities of the school — that is to say, the necessities of some bankrupt managers, is simply an invitation to jobbery.

*LORD NORTON: I cannot see how it adds in the slightest degree to the power of the County Councils to give the discretion which is given in the language of this paragraph. In whichever way the words are taken, if they are read as they stand, there is no doubt that their meaning is, as the noble Lord supposes, that these grants are to be given according to the needs of the school. If, on the other hand, the word "needs" were put in the singular instead of the plural, it would be considered that they were to judge whether the school was needed or not, but then the word "relatively" would have no sense at all. What an extraordinary direction to give the County Councils, that they are not to give money unless it is needed. We must suppose the County Councils to be absolute fools if we suppose that they want to distribute their money where it is not needed. It is impossible to suppose that is the meaning of the paragraph. If, therefore, it is meant to stand as we have it, relative to the neediness of the school, it then introduces, as the noble Lord has said, a new principle in the distribution of public education grants money, that the money is to be given according to the worthlessness of the school. It is wholly inconsistent with the later paragraph, by which money is to be given according to the wealth of the school. There is a contradictory calculation, which would be as absurd one way as the other.

LORD HERSCHELL: There is another consideration. Under the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 the Local Authority may give a grant for technical education, and shall restrict the provision so made in proportion to the nature and amount of efficient technical instruction supplied by these schools respectively. So that at present the hands of the County Councils are tied in this way, that they can only distribute the money according to the nature and amount of the technical instruction given in the public schools. The object of this is to give them a freer hand, and to enable them not necessarily to give the money according to the amount of instruction given in the school, but because there may be a school, in a particular part of the county, which it is necessary to support and keep up, and that that can only be done by giving it more than its proportion would be.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Would it not be simpler to repeal these words? I confess I think this clause has a very ugly look.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: I wish my noble Friend would not only repeal these, but a good many other words in the clause, which render, in my opinion, the working of the Act almost impossible.

*LORD HOBHOUSE: I wish to point out that there are two funds over which the County Councils have jurisdiction in applying them to secular education. One is the 1d. rate which they are empowered to raise by the terms of the Technical Instruction Act, the terms of which have been just mentioned by my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell), and which seem to tie down the County Councils to distribute the fund according to the efficiency of the school. If the policy of the Technical Instruction Act is to be reviewed, it may be necessary to relax that restriction in some measure. But there is another fund over which the County Councils have absolute discretion at the present moment, and that is the fund which arises from the Beer and Spirit Duties. The share of the County Councils is to be dealt with as the Probate Duties are dealt with—that is to say, it is to be carried to the Exchequer Contribution Account, and when it is there the County Councils have a discretion given to them to apply it to technical education. They may apply it or not apply it, and if they determine to apply it there is nothing in the Statute to limit their discretion as to what will determine the application of the funds. It seems to me that if too little liberty has been left them this is not a convenient opportunity of considering it, and I think we have been hurried rather into the discussion. I think this is not a convenient opportunity for revising or altering the policy, which was no doubt very well considered, of the Technical Instruction Act. I think your Lordships will find, if this clause is wholly omitted, the County Councils will have as much discretion as they possibly can desire in assisting a poor school which may exist in a particular part of the county which is very much in need of a technical school. They will have as much power as they can possibly want, having a free hand with respect to the Beer and Spirit Duties, and I think your Lordships will consider that it is not desirable now to repeal a policy which was very well considered a year ago, when the Technical Instruction Act was passed.

LORD HERSCHELL: I am sorry to trouble your Lordships again. I cannot agree that the policy of this scheme was well considered, because your Lordships had no sort of opportunity of considering it at all, and we are of course not bound by considerations which have taken place elsewhere. I think that it would carry out what has been suggested by the noble Marquess in effect, if the clause were made to read in this way—

> "That the Local Authority shall consider all the circumstances, and shall not be bound to distribute the provision so made, exclusively in proportion to the nature and amount of the technical instruction supplied by the schools."

That, it seems to me, would free their hands, whilst pointing out what should be the ordinary rule. It would say that they should not be bound exclusively to do so, though they would be empowered to do it.

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: Would the noble Lord consent to the sub-section being now struck out, and give notice to introduce the Amendment on the Third Reading?

*LORD THRING: No; I could not consent to that.

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: Then I must say that I should certainly use my best endeavours to prevent the Bill being read a third time with that sub-section in it.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY: I hope the noble Lord will not strike out the sub-section as it stands at present. It seems to me it is intended to meet a very serious difficulty. We are looking about to find good centres for technical education all over our counties. In many cases we find there are old endowed schools which are poverty stricken, and which have been revived by schemes of the Charity Commissioners, but which are certainly not able to go in for technical education unless they have funds provided. I think it would be better if we were allowed to subsidise those schools instead of starting new institutions all over the counties. My attention has been specially called to this by the Charity Commissioners themselves, and they said they thought it would be well worth while that special attention should be paid to the many endowed schools in various parts of the country which were capable of doing the work, but which were now starved for want of a little assistance.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I think we had better, under the stress of circumstances, as we are bound to pass the Bill by the 31st if possible, pass it through Committee without amendment, and then any Amendment can be taken on the Third Reading.

LORD HERSCHELL: I have read the words which I propose.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2.

*LORD BASING: My Lords, I find a great deal of difficulty with regard to the word "appropriated" in this clause. The Act of last Session, the Customs and Excise Act, seems to have contemplated, and the County Councils seem to think it necessary that they must appropriate the whole of this money for the purpose of technical education, not only that they have received it, but that they must apply it for that purpose or else leave it alone. I think, if your Lordships will allow the addition of the words of which I have given notice, it would be advisable. The words are after "appropriated" to insert "or to be set aside for." Those words will include that they may set it aside and appropriate it as they find convenient from year to year. Recollect, my Lords, that the money assigned to the County Councils last July has not yet been received, and will not be received until the commencement of the next financial year. It must be many months before any scheme can be devised in many of the counties for appropriating the money, and even then great difficulty will be found, I daresay, in appropriating the whole of it. I move, therefore, that after the word "appropriated" the words "or to be set aside for" be inserted.

*LORD THRING: I have no objection to those words, on the understanding that they are not to be inserted till the Third Reading.

*VISCOUNT CROSS: I hope the noble Lord will consent to put it off until the Third Reading.

*LORD BASING: I really fail to appreciate the necessity of passing this Bill in such a hurry; because, as I have said before, the money is not really payable to the County Councils until after the 31st of March. It is a delusion to suppose that that is a fixed point for dealing with this money. The money will not be passed or merged into the Contribution Account until that other account is closed. There are two years in question now, the year in which the money is received and the year in which it is spent, and it so happens that another year is the time referred to here. It seems to me not necessary to refer to the 31st of March, when we know that not one sixpence of the money will be received until after that date.

*LORD NORTON: It is not clear what the money is that is talked of here. It refers to the most extraordinary misappropriation of money that has ever been made in this country, and I do not wonder at the delicately veiled term of "any sum of money." One thing does not seem to be understood at all, and that is whether it is an annual sum or a sum down. The noble Lord who spoke last treated it apparently as an annual sum. The Probate Duties in Scotland, likewise given, are an annual revenue — an annual sum, whereas this was a definite sum which had been voted by Parliament for the redemption of beer licences, but that scheme having failed Parliament did not know what to do with the voted money, and it was handed over to the County Councils. It really seems absurd to say that the County Councils are to be enabled to spend this money before they have actually got it, and before they know whether it is to be an annual sum or only a sum down. It is talked of in this Bill by no description whatever, except the vague term "any sum."

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: I do not understand whether the noble Lord moves his Amendment or not.

*LORD BASING: I have moved it.

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: As regards the appeal made by the noble Marquess as to the stress of time, and without agreeing to anything, it may be considered that it should go out on Third Reading, and an Amendment like that proposed by my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) substituted for it. With regard to the Amendment now before us, I should like to know from the noble Lord who has charge of the Bill, and from the Government, whether they accept the Amendment of Lord Basing or not?

*LORD THRING: I will accept the Amendment.

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: If it is to be inserted on Third Reading, I, for one, will not object.

*LORD THRING: I have said that I accept the Amendment of my noble Friend (Lord Basing) on condition that he does not insist upon it now, but I undertake to put it in on the Third Reading.

*LORD BASING: If the noble Lord's observation applies to all three of my Amendments I am content.

*LORD LINGEN: Then on Clause 2 I withdraw my Amendment, seeing the way in which Lord Basing has disposed of his Amendment.

*LORD BASING: I can only withdraw the Amendment on the understanding that it should be considered on the Third Reading.

*LORD THRING: I have said that I accept the Amendment of Lord Basing. I intend to put it in on the Third Reading.

*LORD BASING: Then I certainly must propose the second Amendment also.

*LORD THRING: I have no objection to that on the same condition.

*LORD BASING: Then I propose, at the end of the clause, to add these words: "Until the County Council shall have made an order for such application." That is to say, that the County Council shall have it in its power, when satisfied that it had done all in its power for the special appropriation of the money, to deal with it according to the language of the Local Government Act.

*LORD THRING: I cannot accept that Amendment, because it would have the effect of enabling the County Council at the end of next year to rescind the resolutions of the County Council come to this year. There is no objection to a County Council rescinding its resolutions passed during the present year, but it is not intended that a power should be given to a County Council to rescind next year resolutions which they may have passed upon the subject of technical education this year.

*LORD BASING: The question is not of rescinding the resolution, but of recognising that the time has arrived when all has been done that need be done, and, therefore, that the balance may be paid over to take its place in the Exchequer Contribution Account according to the intention of the Bill.

*LORD LINGEN: I must say, unless the Amendment of my noble Friend is accepted, the County Council will be placed in a very unpleasant position. This is a clause saying that if you have once passed a resolution appropriating a sum of money you shall have parted with it for ever, and cannot rescind the resolution; or, as my noble Friend has pointed out, if you find you have made a mistake, and there is more money than is wanted, apply the balance to the other purposes which the Act of Parliament gives you power to do. Noble Lords have talked a great deal of decentralisation in this House, and entrusting powers to Local Authorities, and now the first thing you do is to propose to pass an Act of Parliament saying that, having placed these moneys under the control of the County Council, they shall not go back from any resolution which they may have come to respecting them, under any circumstances whatever.

*THE MARQUESS OF RIPON: I should be the last person in the world to wish to restrict the freedom of County Councils, and my objection to the Act of 1889 is that it does most unwisely, I think, restrict that freedom in many respects, but in this particular instance the noble Lord who has just sat down ought to remember that there are two parties concerned—the County Councils and the Institutions. If the County Councils promise the Institutions that they will pay certain sums of money to them, and then the Institutions perform certain duties in respect of it, I say the County Councils are bound to carry out their promise, and that they are not to have the power of rescinding their resolutions. That is, as I understand it, the light in which we may regard the matter in respect of this particular point.

*LORD MONK-BRETTON: My noble Friend misunderstands altogether my meaning, and the effect of the clause. Of course, if County Councils have engaged with certain schools or Institutions that they will give certain sums of money they would be bound in honour to do so; but according to this, if a County Council have resolved that a certain sum of money shall be appropriated to, or set apart for, purposes of technical education generally, and if after that they find they have appropriated more than is wanted to be spent in that way, they shall not be at liberty to rescind that as they should be. As the noble Lord has said, if they have once passed the resolution, they are not to go back from it.

*LORD BASING: I would venture to submit to your Lordships the consideration that if the County Councils can never undo grants which they have made that converts the grants into endowments. But let me ask what is to happen if a school becomes thoroughly inefficient? Is the County Council still to go on appropriating money to it?

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I think it would be very desirable, before we get to the Third Reading, if the noble and learned Lords would apply their minds to this clause, and tell us whether it really bears the interpretation that has been put upon it. I think it is really too much to say that resolutions of the County Councils are to be like the laws of the Medes and Persians, that as long as the trees grow and the waters run they shall continue—and that the resolutions of County Councils are to go on for ever.

LORD HERSCHELL: Looking at it by the light of nature, I do not see any objection to the noble Lord's proposal. I think that the objection is a tangible objection. A strong objection was made to this provision, and those who may be supposed to know something about the matter had, no doubt, some good reason for inserting it.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: What is their reason?

*LORD BASING: The Local Government Board have no objection to my Amendment. It is not for the purpose of limiting the Act in any way, but merely for the purpose of giving County Councils an opportunity of considering what they will do. It is not at all that this money is to be appropriated to such schools, because there are no such schools in many of the counties. There are proposals made that the money shall be peremptorily applied, and that the County Councils may be permitted to give them up if they find the schools to be inefficient. It is not of necessity that the money should be applied in support of existing schools.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: Would not your Lordships be satisfied to do this? On one side it is said that the County Councils object to it; and my noble Friend says, on the other hand, that they do not object. I think many of us do not quite see what the effect of the noble Lord's words would be. If he were willing to move them on Third Reading of the Bill that would be a more convenient opportunity for considering the matter and saying what ought to be done.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: The Local Government Board, like many other powerful authorities, veils its proceedings in mystery. It is so at the present moment; but, as far as I have been able to ascertain, they have no objection whatever to the clause.

*LORD THRING: Of course, I accept the Amendment most readily. The reason that I proposed the clause was, in fact, because I was ordered to do so. I was told it was opposed by the Local Government Board. If there is any objection it goes at once, of course; and I most readily accept the Amendment.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: Not now.

*LORD THRING: It will be for consideration on Third Reading.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY: May I ask my noble Friend whether, in future, if County Councils have allotted so much money for the purpose of technical education they are never to draw back, whatever the circumstances may be? I understand that to be the meaning.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: No; it is the other way.

THE EARL OF HARROWBY: Then they can draw back?

*LORD THRING: Yes.

LORD HOBHOUSE: I think the Bill will be improved by the omission of the portion of this paragraph beginning at the words "Where a Council shall have referred to a Committee the question of appropriating" money. The effect of it would be this: that where a Council, before deciding to appropriate money for the purpose of technical education desires to be informed by a committee, which is a very common and reasonable state of mind for Councils to be in, and calls upon that committee to inquire and report whether any, and what, part of the fund in question shall be appropriated to the purposes of technical education, that is to be considered as if the Council had passed a resolution appropriating the sum. I think that can hardly be intended; but as at present advised as this section is drawn, it seems to me to be very injurious as regards the County Councils. If it merely means that where a County Council, having decided to appropriate something, refers the question to a committee to consider the mode in which that something can be best applied for the purposes of technical education, that would not be so objectionable; but I cannot help thinking it is a very undesirable thing for this Bill, not by a direct Resolution, but by a side wind, as it were, in regard to this one particular fund, to interfere in the mode of business as transacted between Councils and their committees. I do not see that any good is to be got out of this which is commensurate with the amount of inconvenience from the interference with the business which has to be done in the County Councils. I therefore move the omission of the clause.

*LORD THRING: This is a clause in which I am deeply interested as a Surrey County Councillor. My noble Friend's objections, I think, are really due to his imagination. All the clause does is this: The 1st clause declares that where money has been appropriated by a County Council it may then be carried bodily to a suspense account. What is it that the County of Surrey and various other counties have done? They have not decided that the money should be appropriated, but they have decided to refer the question to a committee to report to them whether or not the whole or any part of that money shall be appropriated. Now, the whole meaning of this clause, which is supposed to be so injurious and to interfere between County Councils and their committees, is simply this: I will take one example with which I am acquainted. The County Council of Surrey has referred to a committee the question as to whether that county shall or shall not appropriate the money for the purpose of technical education. If this clause is carried that money would not be carried over to general purposes until the committee have reported upon it; in other words, it simply gives a county that has referred the question to a committee exactly the same benefit which the previous part of the clause gives in the case of a county which has appropriated the money. I cannot conceive a more innocent clause; and if it were rejected, the effect would be that wherever a County Council has not determined that the money shall be appropriated, but has most wisely, as many of them have done, referred the matter to a committee, the whole intention of the Act would be frustrated, and the whole of the money would have to be carried over to a general account, although everybody is anxious that it should not be so carried over.

*LORD HOBHOUSE: The noble Lord has given a very innocent interpretation to his draft, but see what it does. It says—

> "Where a Council shall have referred to a Committee the question of appropriating to purposes of technical or manual instruction any sum consisting of the whole or any part of such moneys."

The former part of the section is to apply. Then what is to be done with that sum? It is not merely that it shall not be carried over to a general account, but that it shall remain applicable to such purposes, and shall not be applied in manner provided by Sub-section 2 and the following sub-section —that is to say, that it shall remain applicable to the purposes of technical education, and shall not be carried over for the purposes of general account until an event which may never happen.

*LORD THRING: That is so; it is not to be carried over to the account for general purposes until the committee has given its decision. In other words, you preserve the money in a suspense account until the committee has given its decision; and when they have done so, the County Council will determine what is to be done with the money. Therefore, it will either go over to the general account or be applied for the purposes of technical education. It will simply keep the money to suspense account during the time the committee are considering, and in order to give the Council time for deliberation as to whether the money shall or shall not go over for technical education.

LORD HERSCHELL: I think the difficulty might be got rid of by putting in the few words which probably the House might think desirable should be put in. This would suspend the money until the Committee had made their Report, which, of course, under ordinary circumstances is the proper thing to do; that is to say, that where a matter has been referred by the County Council to a Committee the effect would be to keep the whole of the money in the hands of the Council for application to those purposes in case the Committee should report in its favour, and the Council should decide to so adopt it. But, of course, there is this consideration, the Committee might never Report at all, and it strikes me it would be well to put in after the word "thereon" the words "or until the appointment of the Committee be rescinded." If the Council has referred the matter to a Committee and the Committee have not reported, the money will be kept over until the Committee has made its

Report; but, of course, if they should rescind the appointment of the Committee, with the view of not doing anything further, then I presume that would not be the intention.

*Lord THRING: Quite so.

*Lord BASING: A Council may see their way to appropriating some of the money at one time and some at another, and the consequence may be that the County Council may be a year in deciding how to use the money. I should think it is not the intention to press them to do it at the particular moment, they having the power to dispose of what they do not want at the close of the year.

*Lord LINGEN: I should like to call attention to a case which I think it is not impossible might occur. The Committee may have under consideration a Report, either original or upon reference back to them, which the majority of the Council do not agree to, and any clause which gives the Committee, or which may seem to give them, a *locus standi* of their own, as against the Council, is certainly interfering to a very considerable extent with the principle of Local Government. The Committee is a creature of the Council, appointed, as the Statute says, by the Council for business which may be more conveniently transacted in Committee, but the relations of the Council to the Committee, I think, ought not to be interfered with, and I cannot help thinking, from what I have myself observed in the working of the County Councils, that this clause as it stands would not conduce to the smooth transaction of their business.

*Lord THRING: I am sorry to trouble your Lordships again upon this subject. This clause does not affect in one iota or in any shape whatever the relations of the County Councils with their Committees. I shall certainly accept the words which have been suggested by my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) in order to remove the effect of the possibility that the Committee may not have reported; but the whole effect of this clause is to prevent the money being carried over to general purposes when the Council and its Committee and everybody else in the county may want it to be carried over to technical education purposes. All the clause says is, that during the time the Committee and the Council are deliberating, the money shall not be necessarily carried over to general purposes. The meaning is exactly the same as in the first part of the clause, with this difference, that in the one case the money has been appropriated by the Council, and in the other, the Council before appropriating it have sent the question to a Committee to ascertain their opinion, and that opinion has not been delivered. All I want is to wait until the opinion of the Committee has been delivered before we tyranically direct that the money shall go to a purpose for which it was not intended to be applied. I trust your Lordships will not omit the clause, because I think it would be absolutely ruinous to my scheme from top to bottom.

Lord HENNIKER: I hope my noble Friend who is in charge of this Bill will not take out this clause. It may be amended, perhaps, in the way proposed, but there is no objection to it on the part of the Local Government Board. It has been carefully considered in the way it is now drawn up, and I think the noble and learned Lord should stick to his opinion, to allow it to remain in the Bill.

*Lord MONK-BRETTON: As the matter stands I think it is not desirable, but the Amendment which has been suggested by my noble and learned Friend (Lord Herschell) in some way mitigates it. The words which Lord Thring agreed to accept from my noble Friend opposite at the end of the first sub-section of the 2nd clause will likewise apply to this 2nd sub-section, and in that way it is mitigated. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, I should be willing, on the understanding that the Amendment of Lord Herschell is accepted, and considering that the Amendments of Lord Basing have been already agreed to, to let the Bill pass this stage, but reserving of course full freedom to consider it to-morrow when we shall have the Third Reading. I should like to ask if the Bill passes now, subject to these Amendments, when we shall see the Amendments in print, so that we may have an opportunity of considering them?

*LORD THRING: The Amendments will be in print to-morrow morning.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported without Amendment; Standing Committee negatived; and Bill to be read 3ª to-morrow.

REGISTRATION OF CERTAIN WRITS (SCOTLAND) BILL. [H.L.]—(No. 61.)

Read 3ª (according to order) and passed and sent to the Commons.

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS AND THE CIVIL SERVICE.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

THE EARL OF DUNDONALD, in rising to ask Her Majesty's Government if they will consider the expediency of reserving a certain number of places annually in the Civil Service for bestowal, without public competition, on eligible and deserving warrant and non-commissioned officers of the Army at the expiration of their period of service with the colours, said: My Lords, before going over the reasons which make it desirable, in my opinion, that Her Majesty's Government should favourably consider the question which I have placed on the Notice Paper, I will, with your Lordships' permission, make a few observations on the Return which last July, at my instance, your Lordships agreed should be furnished. This Return was to give the average age and service of non-commissioned officers of each rank doing duty with the colours. I regret that I asked for the average age and service and that I did not have the Return made out in categories of rank as corporals and sergeants, as the form of the Return has, I fear, to some extent obscured the real point. What I should have asked for was the proportion of sergeants and corporals in various categories of age and service under 24 years of age and 22 years of age respectively. This would have been clearer than the Return I obtained, and would have been more useful in opening the eyes of the public. As showing the short service of the sergeants in many regiments, I hold in my hand a Return of the age of the sergeants of the 92nd Highlanders—now the 2nd Battalion of the Gordon Higlanders—a regiment taken quite at random. Of the 24 duty sergeants, no less than 10 were under five years' service on January 1, 1890, the average, however, being brought up by a few old non-commissioned officers, who, it must be remembered, are now fast dying out of the Service. I will give another instance: Staff-sergeant M'Donald, of the 2nd Life Guards, was included in the return of average age and service of his rank. There were 17 other non-commissioned officers in the same rank with him; but M'Donald's service was 48¾ years, so that he had enough service to give himself and 16 other non-commissioned officers nearly three years' service apiece. These are instances of how an average in some cases works out and makes the Return, I regret to say, to this extent a misleading picture of the state of matters. In support of my views as to the danger of extreme youth in the non-commissioned officers' ranks I will quote some few short extracts from the proceedings of the Committee on Army Organisation, presided over by Lord Airlie, which began its sittings in June, 1879, and took much evidence as to the youth of the non-commissioned officers and men of many of the regiments which had then lately been on active service in South Africa. Sir Evelyn Wood, who then commanded the troops in South Africa, in answer to the question,

> "What is the result of your observation as to the steadiness in the performance of their duties of the young soldiers who came out with the reinforcements?"

said—

> "I think they were wanting in steadiness."

Asked then,

> "Do you attribute that in any way to the want of old non-commissioned officers among them?"

he said,

> "Yes, certainly to the want of good non-commissioned officers, and to their not knowing their officers."

Sir Evelyn Wood proceeded—

> "I go further and say that I think that the young soldier is like a boy who has never had a fall out hunting until he gets a shake. I think that they would fight very well going forward, but it is when you want them to come back steadily or after they have had a shake that the difficulty arises. I should not mind taking the youngest boys into fight, but when they have received a momentary check and the men begin to tumble down around them, it is then when you find the difficulty with young soldiers. It is when you want them to

> turn tail on and come back steadily that you want old soldiers, and especially old non-commissioned officers."

Sir Evelyn Wood made these criticisms on the force in South Africa, as it was, in the year 1878. Now, it is necessary, and will, I think, be very interesting, to compare the ages of the Army in 1878 with the ages of the Army in 1890 in order to see whether the elements of success in war in accordance with Sir Evelyn Wood's criticism exist in the Army now to a greater or lesser extent than in 1878. I find by the Army Returns that in 1878, during the war in South Africa, there were serving with the colours 528 non-commissioned officers and men above 25 years of age in every 1,000, whereas in 1890 there were serving with the colours only 351 non-commissioned officers and men above 25 years of age, thus showing a great decrease in the class of men of 25 years and upwards from which the non-commissioned officers and steady old soldiers must necessarily be drawn. There was a meeting last January of officers at the Royal United Service Institution to hear a lecture on the recruiting question, and there was a unanimity of opinion amongst those present that something should be done for the non-commissioned officers in the way of improving their position and prospects. One colonel, commanding a cavalry regiment, said—

> "I have got some 324 recruits of under a year's service at this moment. I remember the days of the old, tried non-commissioned officers — reliable, experienced, trustworthy men. I am not in a position any more than you to draw upon the quartermaster's stores for an old head to screw to young shoulders, and I look forward with a certain degree of apprehension to the future."

Now, I would ask, do not these criticisms and the large further increase of young soldiers justify an appeal to Her Majesty's Government to improve the position of the non-commissioned officers? Officers are easily obtainable. Recruits for that rank came in shoals to compete at the examinations which were held by the Civil Service Commissioners for commissions in Her Majesty's Army. But that is not the case with non-commissioned officers. Where the candidates for commissions as officers number tens for one place vacant, there is a dearth in many regiments of good men who are either willing to accept or who

are in any way fitted for the position of a non-commissioned officer. Why is this so? It is because the position of non-commissioned officers is not sufficiently attractive. It entails far harder work than used to be the case in the days of long service, on account of the number of men passing through the ranks who require almost unremitting drill and attention, and also, it must be remembered, on account of the increase in the duties which an Army now has to perform. In order to be efficient in modern warfare far more is required of non-commissioned officers than formerly. Now, I will refer your Lordships to what is done by other countries. We have adopted their short service system, by which the men soon retire from the ranks. Continental Armies have recognised that it is necessary to offer special attraction to induce this deserving body of men to continue on in the Service; but this country, though having adopted the short service system of Continental countries, stands alone in offering few or no attractions to the non-commissioned officer by making service in that rank a means of obtaining civil employment, as is done in France and Germany. Though I am strongly of opinion that the best plan in this country, and the cheapest way in the long run, would be to offer increased pensions to the non-commissioned officers to induce them to stay on in the Service and devote themselves to it, to act not only as an incentive to those who are doing their best in the Service but, by a possible forfeiture of their pensions, as a deterrent to those who might otherwise get into trouble with light heart—though I think that a liberal pension is the best means in this country to reward non-commissioned officers, still I cannot conceive that any large measure of increase in pension, even to a body so necessary as this middle-class is to the welfare of the Army, can be proposed without receiving the most strenuous opposition from many short-sighted persons. This being the case, I have confined my question to the point of asking Her Majesty's Government if they will grant a certain number of nominations to the lower division of the Civil Service, to be distributed annually to deserving non-commissioned officers in the Army who have shown themselves reliable and qualified for the duties to which they might be appointed. I can not think that the taking away of a limited number of appointments from those which are competed for yearly would be opposed by the patriotic youth of the country when they know that it is only by inducements such as these that our Army can be made as efficient as it ought to be by procuring a sufficient number of experienced non-commissioned officers. In this manner the public would be persuaded to consider the profession of the soldier as being an advantageous as well as an honourable one. Persons may say—Why should not non-commissioned officers compete with civilians at the examinations that are held? The answer to this is that as a matter of fact they cannot compete with young men who have made the few subjects in which the examinations take place the object of unremitting study from their earliest boyhood. Men who have been about the world, serving their country in various climates, though practically able to undertake the duties of an office, are mostly unable to compete at an examination with boys fresh from grammar schools or crammers. If a certain number of nominations to the Civil Service were granted to the Army at large, without public competition, there is no reason why they should not be given through colonels of regiments, who are best able to select the best man for a post. As colonels commanding regiments are entrusted with large powers of punishment, they should also, when possible, be given large powers of reward. On this point let me draw your Lordships' attention to the evidence of Colonel now Sir Edmund Du Cane, given as head of Her Majesty's prisons. His evidence was given before the Select Committee on the Civil employment of soldiers, sailors, and marines, which sat in 1876. He said he was desirous of obtaining the services of two good ex-non-commissioned officers. He knew them both, and that they were excellent men, but when they went up to be examined they failed before the Civil Service Commissioners. One of them was ex-Sergeant-Major Brodie, of the Royal Engineers, whose qualifications for employment in the Clerks' Department I will enumerate to your Lordships. Sergeant-Major Brodie, R.E., after the examination required by the War Office, was appointed a third-class military staff-clerk in the office of the Deputy Adjutant-General of the Royal Engineers. He was then promoted, and went to Melbourne with Colonel Waugh, where he was employed in the Mint, and in the Accounts Department. He was entrusted with a duplicate key of the cash box, and was employed to countersign and pay cheques, performing his responsible duties with the greatest satisfaction to his superior officer, who sent to Colonel Du Cane the highest testimonials as to his conduct and capabilities. But Sergeant-Major Brodie, with his practical experience, and with such testimony from his official superior as to his capacity for undertaking the duties of the office which he was desirous of filling, was prevented continuing his service to the State because he was not fit to compete with youths fresh from the crammers. If the Government favourably consider this proposal I trust that the nominations will, as I have said, be placed at the disposal of officers commanding regiments, who are best qualified to make the selections. With regard to this, Mr. Ramsey, in his evidence before Lord Randolph Churchill's Committee, in 1888, stated that he wished to obtain the services of 10 good ex-non-commissioned officers. He sent round to 10 officers commanding regiments, and got 10 most excellent men; but he goes on to state that the system was changed, that a roster was kept of these men that he required, and that from the roster he did not get such good men as he got when the personal responsibility of the officers commanding the regiments was brought into play. Now, if Her Majesty's Government wish a precedent for dealing in any special manner with any particular class, I would refer them to the privileges enjoyed by the Indian cadets, Queen's cadets, and University candidates at Army examinations, and I would ask them to extend some such similar privileges to the non-commissioned officers of the Army. I will conclude by reading to your Lordships an extract from the Report of the Select Committee on Army Organisation, a Report which was joined in by two late distinguished Members of your Lordships' House—Lord Napier of Magdala and Lord Airlie. In this Report there is the following short but weighty passage:—

> "We have taken a great deal of evidence from staff and regimental officers, in all of which there is a general consensus of opinion that under the present system there is great difficulty in obtaining non-commissioned officers of the same type as those which have been created under the old long-service system and who are rapidly dying out of the Army. There has been a necessity for promoting very young soldiers who have not sufficient knowledge and experience to command the respect of those under them, and there is a general apprehension, which we fully share, that unless effective measures are taken without delay to remedy this evil, the discipline and efficiency of the Army will be most seriously affected, not only as regards the performance of its duties in peace, but also with regard to its steadiness in action. The evidence of officers who have served in the late campaigns, especially those who have observed the conduct of the young regiments sent out to South Africa last year, is conclusive on this point. We consider, therefore, experience has proved that evidence, that even with the increase of pay and advantages lately given to non-commissioned officers, enough has not yet been done to secure an ample supply of such men as are essential to the efficiency of the Army."

I feel, my Lords, that anything I can say will not strengthen those words. I trust Her Majesty's Government will view this question on its merits, bearing in mind those precedents I have mentioned for allowing privileges to certain classes of men in the State in limitation of the rights of the public to open competition. The privileges possessed by University candidates, Indian cadets, and Queen's cadets, are all in favour of certain bodies, and against open competition, and I see no reason why such a deserving body of men as non-commissioned officers, who are so essential to the State, should not be treated in a similar manner. I will only remark, in conclusion, that the evidence which I have quoted, given before the Committee on Army Organisation, is as true now as on the day when it was given before that Committee.

Lord DORCHESTER: My Lords, when I look at the state of the clock, and the condition of your Lordships' Benches, I feel it would be impracticable for me to detain your Lordships for more than a few minutes upon this paramount and most important subject, a subject that when England is slumbering at peace, reposing with her money bags under her, may not seem of so much importance, but which, if war broke out to-morrow—and war in these days is not a question of months, but of days—would be very quickly brought to her knowledge. I think the noble Earl has rendered a vast service in bringing this question before your Lordships' notice. It is a question that, compared with one which arose earlier in the evening, I venture to think, is as a mountain to a mole-hill. It is a question which, in a country where voluntary enlistment takes place, and the opinion of discharged soldiers is spread abroad among their countrymen as they return to their pauper's homes, ought to strengthen the minds of all those noble and gallant Lords that I see around me; it ought to strike those who, having held high office, may not perhaps have thought it worth while to give it very great attention. I myself remember, not only the Battles of Ulundi and Tel-el-Kebir, at which I was almost too old to serve. I remember the Indian catastrophies in which I was not too old. I also remember the disturbance with the only European Power with which we have been brought into contest since the great war. The question of old soldiers against young soldiers has never been half considered. The noble Earl who has just sat down has put it very forcibly—young soldiers will fight. There is not a butcher's boy in London who will not fight; but how long will he stand up to fight? He will stand about as long against an experienced prize fighter as I think a young soldier will stand in the present day against an old soldier of the Crimean War. I had intended to have alluded to an illustrous and gallant Duke who sits on the back Bench, and to call for his testimony as to the way in which the soldiers acted in those days; but I see a noble and gallant Friend of mine, who is distinguished with the Victoria Cross, on the back Benches, who can support me in that opinion. I saw three War Ministers here early in the evening, but they, although not young soldiers, have fled from the field. There is now one gallant officer who holds the post of Under Secretary of War, and who, I think, notwithstanding that official description which it is his duty to preserve, testifies to the feelings which I am giving expression to. But there is one very serious point, and one that has occurred to me for 30 or 40 years, which is, that the English soldier's position is one of pains and penalties without any adequate reward—I will not say even without an adequate reward, but without any reward at all. It is true there is something equivalent to the old Chelsea Pensioners' Retreat which has been done away with. But what happens in foreign countries? We all know how well the messengers in this House discharge their duties. We all know how well other messengers, with medals on their breasts, discharge their duties; but I would ask, why are no such appointments given to old soldiers or sailors? Those of your Lordships who have read this morning's papers must have been struck most forcibly with the gallantry and devotion shown by our British sailors in the catastrophy off Gibraltar. The same thing may be said of the British soldier. I have seen instances, and I could, if I thought it fitting, detain your Lordships perhaps too long on this subject; but why are no places ever given to them as the noble and gallant Earl has asked? No proportion of places under civil patronage are ever given to the soldiers and sailors who have deserved well of their country by long service, or otherwise. I would not attempt to answer that question—I cannot answer it; I feel I may challenge your Lordships to give me an answer in vain. It is Parliamentary patronage that has interfered with this matter, and I think it is a pity we do not see the same thing among ourselves as when you go and knock at an Ambassador's door in this country when the first thing you will see is a soldier whose coat is covered with military medals wearing the livery of his master. The same thing is never seen in this country. I know of but two instances. One of them is employed, I may say, in the National Gallery. It is true, the illustrious Duke at the head of Her Majesty's Army distributes as many places as he can among the soldiers; but I do trust that your Lordships' consideration, and the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, will be given in their own interests, and in the interests of the country, to the consideration of this point.

*LORD SUDELEY: My Lords, the question which my noble and gallant Friend has raised is a very important one, but I would venture to suggest to the noble Earl that he has forgotten one important branch of Her Majesty's Forces; that is, the Navy. This question has been brought before your Lordships and the other House on several occasions, and your Lordships may remember that in the year 1877 a Committee sat in the other House and went very fully into the whole subject of civil employment. That Committee made a Report, and in that Report they specially refer to the point to which the noble Earl has alluded, namely, the great difficulty which old sailors and old soldiers have in competing for open competition places. In the Report that Committee suggested that the Government should take into their consideration very strongly whether in questions of open competition especial attention ought not to be paid to those matters which old sailors and old soldiers are more especially able to deal with; in fact, that the rigid *dicta* of the open competition should be amended, and that openings should be given, so that old soldiers and old sailors should have a fair chance. On that Committee I think my noble Friend Lord Wantage served with Lord Wemyss, and a great many Members of the other House. The evidence which they took was extremely important, and I should like to ask my noble Friend, when he answers to this question, to state what has been done towards carrying out the recommendations contained in that Report. I think I am right in saying that in the following year a great effort was made in the matter by the Government that was then in power; but what the result was I am not at all clear. I remember in that Report they specially recommended that the regulations as to age in open competitions ought to be amended as far as old soldiers and sailors were concerned, and also that the question should be taken into consideration whether a man was married or not. I am sure your Lordships will agree that the noble Lord has done very good service in bringing this forward, and I sincerely trust the noble Lord will be able to give us a satisfactory answer.

*Lord CHELMSFORD: My Lords, I trust if Her Majesty's Government consider favourably what I may describe as the very modest request of my noble and gallant Friend, that the scope of the inquiry may be increased, so as to see how it may be possible to increase the inducements of non-commissioned officers to remain with the colours. I am afraid—though, no doubt, if this proposal be acceded to it would be a real inducement to men to remain—it would be hardly right that they should be entitled to receive the advantage of this concession when they retire into the Reserve after merely seven years' service. So long as the deferred pay remains as an inducement to the men to leave the Service after seven years by the bribe of the £21 they are then entitled to, I am afraid we must expect to lose from year to year large numbers of valuable men who under other conditions would be only too glad to remain with the colours. That is the weak point of the present system. There is no doubt about that, and I was very glad to see that the Secretary of State for War, in another place, has promised to enter into that question. The non-commissioned officers of the Army are the backbone of the Service, and it is impossible that the efficiency of the regiments can be maintained unless you have a reliable and efficient body of men as non-commissioned officers of such an age as will carry weight and support them in the difficult task they have to perform of enforcing discipline. If this is done, and such inducements as my noble Friend asked for are accorded to them, I am certain the Army would find itself with a body of non-commissioned officers of much the same character as formerly was the case before the short service system was introduced. Commanding officers are satisfied with the stamp of non-commissioned officers they get; the only complaint is that they are too young, and that just as they are becoming efficient they leave the colours. I trust this may only be a step in advance, and that Her Majesty's Government will favourably consider the question, so that Her Majesty's regiments may obtain what they are now wanting, that is a sufficient complement of old and trusty non-commissioned officers.

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Earl Brownlow): My Lords, I need hardly say that I most entirely sympathise with the noble and gallant Earl who has brought this question forward in his anxiety that some suitable employment should be found for retired warrant officers and non-commissioned officers. The question which he has put to Her Majesty's Government is part of a very much larger matter, namely, the whole question of finding employment for reserve and retired soldiers of all ranks; but as his question specially refers to warrant officers and non-commissioned officers I shall endeavour entirely to confine myself to speaking of those ranks only. The noble and gallant Earl is anxious that they should have advantages in competing in Civil Service examinations, or, rather, that certain posts should be thrown open to them without their having to go through the same competitive examinations as men who have not served in the Army or Navy. I have made it my business to find out from the Civil Service Commissioners what are the posts which are open to competition, and, as far as I gather, the posts that are open to competition are second-class clerkships. I will quote a letter that I have received from the Civil Service Commissioners upon this subject? I find that the clerkships are competed for by very young men, from 17 to 20 years of age, and this is what the Commissioners say—

> "The limits of age for open competition appointments are, as a rule, low. Thus, in 1890, only 12 situations were filled to which persons over 20 were admitted; and for all of these technical qualifications were needed. In the same year 130 clerkships of the second division were competed for by youths between 17 and 20."

Further on they say—

> "Members of the Military or Naval Services can deduct from their actual age any time they have served for pension. But the number of them who avail themselves of this extension is inconsiderable."

I think that answers one of the questions which were put by the noble Lord opposite.

> "While the places generally are such as should be filled by youths, and are in one way or another scarcely suitable for retired soldiers, it does not appear that much could be done

in this direction to help the soldier's cause. More might, perhaps, be done with the large numbers of subordinate situations filled by nomination with a simple qualifying examination."

Certainly one must admit that in the case of retired warrant officers most of them are men who have reached a certain age; and I must say I feel some doubt myself as to whether there would be any great anxiety on their part to obtain second-class clerkships, and to begin life in an office with very young men about 20 years old, which is the age at which these examinations are held. But this does not so strongly apply to non-commissioned officers, but still, even with regard to non-commissioned officers, I doubt whether there would be any very great scramble for the posts of second-division clerkships. At the same time, I cannot help thinking that there might be some further relaxation of the rules, to enable those who are well qualified for clerkships to have some further opportunity of obtaining them. I think that what we must look to with some hope is to any station where, as the Civil Service Commissioners say, a simple qualifying examination is required. I hold in my hand a letter, and I think it is an encouraging one, from the secretary to the National Gallery, in which that gentleman says—

> "Our present head porter was a quartermaster-sergeant in the Coldstream Guards. Among the assistant porters we have two ex-corporals in the Coldstreams, one ex-private in the Hussars, one in the Army Service Corps, one from the East Surrey Regiment, and one from the Royal Engineers."

He then says—

> "Speaking generally, they have turned out well, and the men thus selected are, as a rule, far better disciplined than civilians. There have, however, been one or two exceptions among the short service men."

He further says—

> "All male attendants on the Staff of this Department are qualified by certificates from the Civil Service Commission."

Those are posts which are not open to competitive examination, but which can be obtained simply by a qualifying examination. This is a small Department which is able to employ, as I may inform your Lordships, an old quartermaster-sergeant and two other non-commissioned officers, besides other old soldiers.

LORD DORCHESTER: May I ask whether those appointments are under the Trustees of the National Gallery or under the Government? I rather think myself they are under the Trustees of the National Gallery.

*EARL BROWNLOW: Those appointments are made by the Treasury on the suggestion of the Trustees. I cannot help thinking that if other larger Departments, perhaps, where there are more posts open, would follow the example of this small Department and ask for old non-commissioned officers and privates of the Army to be appointed, the same happy result would be found. I must point out, as I said before, that the questions put by the noble and gallant Earl are part of a very large question, namely, that of the employment of the Reserve men and retired non-commissioned officers and privates of the army. This question again is most intimately connected with the question of recruiting; that question of recruiting has been lately brought prominently to the notice of Her Majesty's Government, and a Committee has been appointed to consider the whole question, of which Committee my noble Friend (Lord Wantage) is the Chairman. The Secretary of State, knowing perfectly well that this question of the employment of old soldiers is intimately mixed up with the question of recruiting, has resolved to extend the Reference to this Committee in order that they may make a full inquiry into the whole question of the employment of soldiers. I think, therefore, we may safely leave this question in the hands of my noble Friend and the Committee over which he is to preside. I can only say that Her Majesty's Government will give every possible consideration to any Report that they may make in the form of practical suggestions for the employment of warrant officers and non-commissioned officers and privates retired from Her Majesty's Army and Reserve men.

THE EARL OF DUNDONALD: My Lords, with your permission I should like to put myself right with regard to the Navy in reference to the remark of my noble Friend as to my having left out that Service. The Report of the Select Committee on the civil employment of soldiers, sailors, and marines, in

1871, specially referred to the Navy, and they stated as sailors entered as boys no inducement was necessary to obtain their services by holding out the prospect of civil employment. As I have brought forward this question partly in the interests of recruiting for the Army, for the obtaining of a better class of non-commissioned officers, and partly in the interests of the non-commissioned officers at present in the Service, I thought it better not to refer to the Navy, though, of course, nothing would please me more than to see every eligible non-commissioned officer of the Navy receiving civil employment. With regard to the statement of the noble Earl the Under Secretary for War about non-commissioned officers, if I understood him rightly, or rather from the letter he quoted, he said that the non-commissioned officers might not be suitable for Lower Division clerkships. I should like to say that Mr. Ramsay, in his evidence before the Select Committee on the Civil Employment of Soldiers and Sailors, in 1888, stated—

> "I took the trouble to write to commanding officers who were friends of mine; I told them exactly the sort of clerk I wanted, and I got first-class men; in fact, out of the men now serving, one came in as a soldier clerk at 5s. a day and is now my store-keeper at £500 a year; and another, who came in at 5s. a day, is now principal clerk at £425."

What I want to see is that good non-commissioned officers should not have to take a back seat in Civil Service employment, but should take their position among clerks, and if they are good men they should be advanced. With regard to the assurance of the noble Earl that this matter will be referred to the Committee, over which my noble Friend Lord Wantage will preside as Chairman, I should like to inform your Lordships and the noble Earl what the views of that noble Lord are on this matter. In presiding at the meeting of the Military Society at Aldershot on the employment of soldiers in civil life, held on the 12th of December, 1889, he is reported to have said—

> "I think it is the act of a good statesman to discover the right moment when the habits of people are so shaped, and perhaps changed, that he may safely introduce his legislative measures. Everybody is agreed that it would be greatly to the advantage of every one if soldiers were more employed in civil life. Commissions and Committees have recommended it, and now is the time when these recommendations should bear fruit."

I think, therefore, the task of my noble Friend will be a very simple one, because he will be able to refer to the Blue Books, and see exactly what has been done on the subject.

*EARL BROWNLOW: In speaking of the difficulty with regard to old soldiers serving as Lower Division clerks I did not mean to imply that retired non-commissioned officers would make bad clerks. There are now 136 of these clerks serving in the War Office, and very good clerks they are; but what I said was that I doubted whether men of somewhat advanced age would care to enter an office side by side with mere boys who had just passed their examination.

NEWFOUNDLAND FISHERIES BILL—[H.L.]

FIRST READING.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Lord KNUTSFORD), in rising to call attention to the Newfoundland Papers laid before Parliament, and to present

> "A Bill to revive certain sections of an Act of the fifth year of the reign of King George the Fourth, chapter fifty-one, for the purpose of carrying into effect engagements with France respecting fisheries in Newfoundland,"

said: My Lords, if in dealing with this subject to-night I am pursuing a somewhat unusual course, I trust that its importance will justify in your Lordships' opinion the action I am taking. The additional Papers with regard to Newfoundland have been but a very short time in your Lordships' hands, and I need hardly say, therefore, that I do not desire in any way to anticipate a full discussion upon these Papers, either upon the Second Reading of the Bill which I am now going to ask you to read a first time or on any other fitting opportunity. But we have thought it very desirable that a full statement of the action and conduct of Her Majesty's Government during the past year and up to the present time in respect to these Newfoundland affairs should be made at the earliest opportunity that presented itself, with a view of removing, if we can do so, some misapprehension which still appears to exist in the colony with regard to the action of Her Majesty's Government, and also in the hope of lessening, by full explanation, the irritation which, I regret to say, undoubtedly exists in the colony against Her Majesty's Government. The object of the Bill which I am now asking your Lordships to read a first time is to revive certain powers which were vested in the Crown of giving instructions to the naval officers of this country with a view of securing the performance of certain Treaties which this country had contracted with France. The Act of 28 George III., c. 35, recites the three Treaties of Utrecht, Versailles, and Paris, by which certain fishery rights were reserved and continued to France along part of the coast of Newfoundland, and certain Royal Declarations, made in 1783, and then, to quote the words of the Act—

> "In order to enable His Majesty to carry the said several Treaties and Declarations into faithful and punctual execution,"

empowers His Majesty by Order in Council to give such orders and instructions to the Governor or officers on the Station as shall be deemed necessary to fulfil the purposes of the Treaty. These provisions were re-enacted by 5 George IV., c. 51, and these powers will be found in the Schedule of the Bill which I am now introducing to your Lordships. The latter Act was continued by 2 & 3 William IV., c. 79, until the year 1834, "and no longer." These Acts, therefore, and the powers which were given by them, have now lapsed. The object, therefore, of this Bill is not new, but the novelty—if I may say so—consists in the introduction of legislation of this kind affecting one individual colony which has been granted a representative Legislature and responsible Government. It cannot be disputed, and certainly will not be disputed by your Lordships, that the Imperial Parliament is within its rights if it legislates *mero motu* for any part of Her Majesty's dominions. That power has been recognised by eminent statesmen in both Houses of Parliament and on many occasions. But it is equally certain that such power ought to be, and is, very rarely exercised, and in the case of colonies having responsible Governments never exercised in matters of what I may call local interest or internal organisation or administration, but only in matters which have an Imperial bearing and character, as, for instance, Merchant Shipping. As your Lordships are aware, by the Merchant Shipping Act of 1854 large parts of that Statute are expressly declared to apply to all British ships and to all Her Majesty's dominions. But in recent years, at all events, very great care has been taken to preserve, as far as possible, the independent powers of Colonial Legislatures. For instance, in the Merchant Shipping Act of last year (53 & 54 Victoria, c. 9), which provided a special load-line for British vessels, there was the express reservation in Section 3 that if a Colonial Legislature adopted for its own vessels a load-line on the same principles as those laid down by the Imperial Act, then the Imperial Act should be, as it were, suspended, and the load-line fixed by the Colonial Legislature should be adopted as if fixed by the Imperial Act. Your Lordships will find that equal care has been taken in this Bill with regard to the Colonial Legislature. By the 2nd section of the Bill it is provided that if at any time before the passing of this Bill, or after it has become an Act, the Colonial Legislature will grant the necessary powers for securing the performance of these Treaties, and of any international arrangement that may be made applicable to the coast of Newfoundland, then the Imperial Act shall, so long as that colonial legislation is in force, be suspended. I admit, my Lords, that a strong case must be made out for Imperial legislation in the case of a colony which has a representative Legislature and responsible Government; but before I sit down I trust that I shall satisfy your Lordships that there is a very strong case in this instance, and that, in fact, Her Majesty's Government had no option but to take the course they have taken, and to introduce this Bill. I would begin with a proposition which again your Lordships will not dispute, and which is, indeed, universally recognised, that if a country has made a Treaty or arrangement with a foreign Power, the country is bound to secure the performance of that Treaty or arrangement by its own subjects. This was the consideration which justified the earlier Acts which I have mentioned, and this is the consideration which justifies the Bill of which I am now asking your Lordships to grant a First Reading. It is true, as I have said, that since the passing of the earlier Imperial Acts a representative Legislature has been granted to Newfoundland; but when your Lordships come to consider the point, you will see that such a grant can in no way relieve this country from its responsibility in respect of its obligations to secure the performance of Treaties or international arrangements affecting that colony. It may be, and probably is, the case that the grant of a representative Legislature imposes upon a colony to which such grant is made the duty, in the first instance, of passing such legislation as may be necessary to secure the performance of Treaties and arrangements with a foreign. Power which affect that colony; but it is equally clear that if that colony fails in its duty and declines to legislate to secure the observance of those Treaties and arrangements, the responsibility of this country remains in full force. I shall show your Lordships that in the present case the colony of Newfoundland has failed in its duty, and that we are therefore bound to act; and I will, with your Lordships' indulgence, state as shortly as I can how this necessity has arisen. As your Lordships are well aware, questions of great difficulty and complexity have for many years past arisen upon the construction of the Treaties which we have made with France relating to Newfoundland, and as to the nature and extent of French fishery rights under those Treaties; and I may say that very few Secretaries of State, either at the Foreign or the Colonial Office, have not at one time or another had to deal with those questions. It is not necessary, on this occasion, to deal with those points of difference, and, looking at the time of the evening, I will not trouble your Lordships with them, but they are very concisely stated at page 4 of the Newfoundland Paper [C. 6044]. But there can be no doubt that, owing to those differences and to the divergence of opinion as to the extent of the French fishery rights along the Coast of Newfoundland, there has been from time to time imminent danger of collision between the French and colonial fishermen; collision which has only been averted by the friendly action and the good sense, tact, and judgment of the Naval officers of both countries; and I am happy to say that those qualities have never been more conspicuously displayed than within the last few years, when the relations, owing to various causes, have become more strained, and, therefore, the probability of collision has greatly increased. Several causes have led to this state of things. I will content myself with mentioning very briefly three. In the first place, the feeling of antagonism has been much intensified owing to the passing by the Colonial Legislature of an Act by which the French were prevented from obtaining free purchase of bait, a privilege which up to the time of the passing of that Act they had enjoyed. No doubt that Act was passed with the view of diminishing and checking the losses which had been sustained by the colonial fishermen and merchants owing to the high system of bounties granted by the French Government, a system which has largely closed European markets to colonial-caught fish. I will not stop to inquire if the Act has worked beneficially or otherwise to the colony, but it is undoubtedly the case that the result of passing that Act has been that the French have insisted more strenuously on their alleged rights under the Treaties. The second cause of the increased hostile feeling has arisen from the fact that every year the effect of the Treaties is felt to be more burdensome to the inhabitants of the colony. At the time of the concession of fishery rights to the French fishermen the state of affairs was very different to what it is now, and the concession was not incompatible with the circumstances of the time when it was made. The coast along which those rights were granted was, I may say, almost uninhabited, and both contracting parties looked upon Newfoundland mainly as a fishing ground for the fishermen of the two countries, and there was very little, if any, fishing, by the colonists. But the population has now very largely increased all along that coast, and, therefore, there can be no doubt that to enforce that arrangement must necessarily cause considerable hardship, inconvenience, and suffering on a growing colony with the regular organisation and institutions of civil life; and it is needless to point out that as the population on the coast increases the evil is naturally intensified. In another point also the colonists have been suffering for some years. They have been desirous of developing the mineral and other resources and industries of the colony, but owing to the construction which has been put upon the Treaties by the French Government, and which we dispute up to a certain point, but not altogether, the development of the colony on that part of the Coast of Newfoundland where the French enjoy Treaty rights has been practically at a standstill, although rich mines are known to exist there. In these circumstances, I think we shall all concur in the following words of Lord Salisbury, which will be found in one of his Despatches:—

> "It is impossible not to sympathise with the colonists in their impatience at the burden of stipulations which seriously interfere both with the economical development of the Island and with the prosecution of their most important industry."

And I may observe, in passing, that successive Governments both Liberal and Conservative, have from time to time endeavoured to arrive at some compromise—some working arrangement by which the burdens of the colonists might be lightened. Lord Derby, in his Despatch of June 12, 1884, which will be found in the Parliamentary Paper [C. 6044, page 4], pointed out the fact that the Commission which sat for that purpose in 1884 was the eighth which had sat since 1846. Those previous attempts to arrive at a working arrangement are all recapitulated in that Despatch, and I need not refer to them; but I may, perhaps, be allowed to point out the fate of the last attempt. The arrangement made in 1884 contained a clause giving the French power to purchase bait freely. That arrangement was sent over for the consideration of the Newfoundland Government, and was returned by that Government with certain modifications which were proposed to the French Government, were accepted by them, and embodied in the arrangement of 1885. In the meantime the General Election of 1885 took place in Newfoundland, and I believe a new Ministry came into power; the arrangement of 1885 was rejected by the Newfoundland Government on the ground mainly that it contained the clause giving the French power of purchasing bait, although that clause was not objected to when the arrangement of 1884 was under consideration. The third and, perhaps, one of the most important causes which have led to the increased antagonism between the French and colonial fishermen along the coast, is the lobster fishery, which has acquired considerable importance within the last few years. In 1884 the export of lobsters was valued at 60,000 dols., while in 1888 it had increased to 385,000 dols. There can be no doubt that the lobster factories established along the coast are of very great benefit to the inhabitants. The Report of Sir B. Walker in December, 1889, upon that point says—

> "The lobster factories are undoubtedly a great benefit to the coast population, and are raising them gradually out of the destitution in which they existed. The land is in itself too poor to entirely support the population, but with the employment given by the factories prevents the actual starvation which in bad fishing seasons was by no means unusual. They provide employment with good wages for men, women, and even young girls, and give a great deal of winter employment to caretakers and others."

It is no wonder, then, that the French claims to catch lobsters and erect factories have been hotly contested. The practical difficulty and danger of collision arise from the desire of both parties to occupy the same fishing ground and have lobster factories at the same places. Sir B. Walker reported, in November, 1889, that it would be almost impossible to prevent collisions occurring in the fishing season of 1890 unless some special provision was made. He further reported that there was an increasing feeling of resentment against the French, and an increasing risk of this feeling showing itself in acts of an aggressive nature. Her Majesty's Government recognised the serious position of affairs at the end of that year—1889—and being anxious to meet the wishes and learn the views of the Newfoundland Government, they telegraphed in December their desire to consult the Premier of the colony, Sir William Whiteway—

> "Generally on matters connected with Newfoundland fisheries, and especially with the object of determining whether it would be possible to submit to arbitration the French claims connected with the lobster fisheries, and to consult with him as to the terms of reference."

We were informed that Sir William Whiteway would come over, but could not get away before the end of March at the earliest; and, as a matter of fact, he and the delegates did not arrive until the end of June 1890. In the meantime, looking to the serious nature of the Report of Sir B. Walker, it was clearly necessary for us to make some working arrangement for the fishing season of 1890. After communication with the Newfoundland Government, and the proposal to the French Government of certain modifications suggested by the Newfoundland Government, which, however, the French Government refused, the terms of a *modus vivendi* for the 1890 season were agreed to here, and communicated to the Newfoundland Government by the telegram of March 12th, 1890. Those terms, with which I will not now trouble your Lordships, are to be found in Parliamentary Paper C. 6044, page 363. We received, I may say immediately, protests against the terms of the *modus vivendi* from the Colonial Ministers and Legislature, and also a protest by a Petition of inhabitants very numerously signed. But I think it will be seen upon examination that those protests were based on a misapprehension of the effect of the *modus vivendi*, which the colonists considered to be a concession of the French claims and an interference with colonial rights of fishing. Her Majesty's Government, in a Despatch on March 31st, 1890, and subsequently in another Despatch on June 24th, dealt fully with those two points; and as this arrangement must be carried on in the fishing season of 1891, I will venture, with your Lordships' permission, to read a short passage in the reply which we gave to the Petition against the *modus vivendi*. It is to be found at page 7 of the Paper [C. 6256] which has just been presented, and is as follows—

> "The petitioners do not here notice the fact that the *modus vivendi* referred to is of a strictly temporary character, its operation being expressly limited to the current fishing season only, neither is any notice taken of the fact that the Colonial Government was consulted as to the terms, which were to some extent modified in order to meet their views. It was, however, necessary to conclude this merely temporary arrangement without referring it to the Colonial Government in its final shape. This act on the part of Her Majesty's Government does not appear to them to have involved any departure from the principles laid down in the Despatch from the Secretary of State (the late Lord Taunton, then Mr. Labouchere) of the 26th of March, 1857, referred to by the petitioners, of which the following is the actual wording, namely, 'that the rights enjoyed by the community in Newfoundland are not to be ceded or exchanged without their consent, and that the constitutional mode of submitting measures for that consent is by laying them before the Colonial Legislature; and that the consent of the community of Newfoundland is regarded by Her Majesty's Government as the essential preliminary to any modification of their territorial and maritime rights.'"

Then it goes on to answer that point—

> "The *modus vivendi* does not cede or exchange any right enjoyed by the inhabitants of Newfoundland, neither does it involve any modification of their territorial or maritime rights. Any right which British subjects have to erect lobster factories on the shores affected by the Treaties and Declarations concerning the fisheries, although its exercise may be temporarily suspended, is not surrendered or prejudiced by the *modus vivendi*, the first sentence of which contains a statement to the effect that the questions of principle and of respective rights are entirely reserved on both sides."

My Lords, instructions were given by the Admiralty to Sir Baldwin Walker, and, in accordance with those instructions, Sir B. Walker issued orders to the officers in the colony to secure the observance of the *modus vivendi*. In the course of the season it became necesssary for Sir B. Walker to give orders for the closing of a lobster factory; and after full notice, when those orders had been disobeyed, the officers were desired to close it by force. It had become known in the colony at that time that the earlier Acts to which I have before referred had lapsed, and it was contended that these proceedings of Sir Baldwin Walker and of the naval officers were illegal. The question of their legality was raised in an action against Sir B. Walker, and I have seen in the papers of this morning that a decision, not upon the facts of the case, but upon the legal points, has just been given by the Supreme Court of Newfoundland in favour of the plaintiff and against Sir B. Walker. As, however, the action is still pending, I should not think it right to make any further observation upon these proceedings. But your Lordships will see that the state of things had now become very serious, and it appeared to Her Majesty's Government absolutely necessary to arrive at some solution of the difficulty. We considered that an arbitration to define the rights of the respective parties upon the lobster fishery questions was the only course to be pursued. The Newfoundland Government was consulted, but we were met by an absolute refusal, couched in very concise terms, which will be found at page 19 of the last Parliamentary Paper. This is the answer of the Newfoundland Government to us:—

> "The Secretary of State for the Colonies asks if we are prepared to submit the question of the lobster fishery to arbitration? After a careful perusal of the Treaties bearing on this matter, we find that there is certainly no question for arbitration. A similar proposition applied to Great Britain would be for the French to claim a right to take salmon in the Tees or the Tay, and for your Majesty to submit such claim to arbitration."

With reference to this last sentence I think it is sufficient to say that at present there is no Treaty giving French fishing rights either in the Tees or the Tay, and in the absence of such Treaty there is clearly no similarity in the cases. The reply goes on—

> "With respect to the lobster industry, this colony will be satisfied with nothing short of the immediate removal of every French lobster factory from the shores of Newfoundland; and all our efforts will be directed to the accomplishment of this object."

What does this refusal amount to? It amounts to this in effect: "Our rights are so clear that there is no ground for referring them to arbitration and they must be enforced." It is needless to point out to your Lordships that as the French entertain an equally strong view of their claims, the enforcement of our rights must of course lead to collisions and to war. That is a position which Her Majesty's Government were not for a moment prepared to accept, and if they had accepted it the country would not have sustained them in their view. We had, as I have said, invited the Premier of Newfoundland to come over to discuss the subject and to consult as to the best mode of proceeding, and he and two delegates, his colleagues in the Colonial Government, Mr. Harvey and Mr. Bond, came over at the end of June. After repeated discussions with them and fully ascertaining their views and wishes, we finally submitted to the French Government their proposals as to how the arbitration should be conducted, what should be the terms of it, and what the conditions. The nature of the proposals and the refusal of the French Government to accept them are clearly stated at page 37 of the Paper last presented [C. 6256]. Writing on October 29th, 1890, M. Ribot says—

> "In his Despatch Lord Salisbury is good enough to recall that, in the pursuit of this work of conciliation, both Governments had, in a spirit of mutual confidence, contemplated the eventuality of a resort to arbitration. But, whilst recognising the advantages of this mode of settlement, the Prime Minister informs us, in the Note to which I have the honour to reply, that it does not appear that this solution would be in conformity with the wishes expressed by Sir W. Whiteway and by the Newfoundland delegates; and he adds that, in order to satisfy the wishes of the colony, France should consent to surrender the rights secured to her by the Treaties; while in return the colony would be disposed either to offer facilities for the purchase of bait, or to make a reasonable money payment proportionate to the value of the advantages surrendered, and as compensation for the interests affected."

M. Ribot further says—

> "But the Government of the Republic do not hesitate to declare that the proposals emanating from the Representatives of the colony appear to rest on a wholly inaccurate appreciation of the nature of the rights and of the importance of the interests of France, as well as on a manifest exaggeration of the evils of which the colony complains."

And he concludes as follows:—

> "In view of these various considerations, and notwithstanding the sincere desire of the French Government to prevent difficulties, always regrettable in themselves, they do not feel justified in acceding to the proposals made to them to exchange their rights either for a money payment or for certain facilities with regard to the purchase of bait. The Government of the Republic are, however, quite prepared to consider such other conditions of an agreement as may be submitted to them, whether they approximate to the bases of the scheme drawn up in 1885, or whether they contemplate an eventual resort to arbitration, in conformity with the preliminary opinions already exchanged on the subject between the two Governments."

I may add that again with the view of meeting the wishes of the Newfoundland Government we submitted to the French Government the further proposals which are mentioned at page 40, and they were also declined, as is shown by reference to page 63. The delegates returned to

Newfoundland in the November following. I must now refer your Lordships to page 62, in which there is a telegram from myself to the Governor, Sir T. O'Brien. In this telegram, dated November 27, I drew attention to the state of the case—

> "In pursuance of the wish of the delegates from Newfoundland who were lately in England, Her Majesty's Government have proposed to the French Government to accept a pecuniary indemnity and a statutory permission to purchase bait as a consideration for renouncing their alleged rights upon the coast and territorial waters of Newfoundland, and abolishing the bounty upon all fish not consumed in French dominions. These proposals have not been accepted."

The words which I want to call your Lordships' particular attention to are the next :—

> "The Government of France intimate that for the settlement of the question they are willing to proceed either by agreement on the lines of the Convention of 1885, or by arbitration. Her Majesty's Government are willing to take whichever of these courses may be preferred by the colony,"

thus showing, my Lords, our desire to meet the wishes of the Colonial Government.

> "But either course will probably occupy a considerable time. An agreement requires lengthened negotiation, and unless a very large discretion indeed is given to the arbitrator, the preparations for submission to arbitration must be lengthy. A renewal of the *modus vivendi* so as to give time for further action is therefore indispensable. But after what has taken place,"

that is to say, after the doubts which had been raised as to the powers of the naval officers—

> "to renew it would be useless, unless statutory force is given to its provisions. I very earnestly press upon your Government to procure the necessary legislation; the power of Her Majesty's Government to bring this controversy to a satisfactory conclusion will be seriously diminished by a refusal."

Then, on page 64, will be found what I may call the *ultimatum* of the Newfoundland Government, which we received by telegraph on December 5th, and which runs as follows :—

> "Ministers desire to call the attention of Her Majesty's Government to the rejection by the colony of the arrangement of 1885 as constituting a reply to the second proposal of the French Government for a settlement based upon that arrangement. With respect to the proposal for a settlement by arbitration, if it is upon the basis proposed by delegates in July last, my Ministers assent; if otherwise they wish for information as to the meaning of the phrase 'settlement by arbitration.' My Government cannot assent to any arbitration which does not include withdrawal of the French from the coast; that the granting of facilities for procuring bait be considered only with the modification of bounties. Whilst my Ministers recognise the necessity for sufficient time being allowed for complete negotiations after they take definite form, they beg to remind Her Majesty's Government of the emphatic protests made by them, the Legislature, and the public, as well as by the delegates, against the *modus vivendi*, as being most hostile to interests of colony, and they are not, therefore, prepared to give legislative sanction to the *modus vivendi*."

Lord Knutsford

Your Lordships will see that there are two distinct points raised in that *ultimatum*. The first is, that the Newfoundland Government will consent to no arbitration unless it is coupled with the condition of the withdrawal of the French from that coast. That condition, as I have already stated, was submitted to the French Government and refused by them. So that practically the colonists refused any arbitration at all. In the second place, the Colonial Government distinctly declined to give legislative sanction to the *modus vivendi* for the fishing season of 1891. The position of Her Majesty's Government, therefore, was very embarrassing, because it was clear that the Colonial Government was not in any way prepared to meet our proposals or to assist us, and yet it seemed to us necessary that some steps should be at once taken, not only to ascertain the extent of our international engagements, but to provide for effect being given to them. There is one more extract I should like to read to your Lordships, because it states shortly the view which Her Majesty's Government took of the position. It is contained in a letter sent from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office on January 16th last, and afterwards communicated to the Newfoundland Government. After recapitulating the facts of the case; the refusal of the French Government to accept the proposals of the Delegates; and the grounds upon which the Colonial Government decline to agree to arbitration, the letter proceeds—

> "The existence of some French rights, whatever their exact interpretation may be, is a matter of absolute certainty. The signature of England has been pledged again and again to their acknowledgment. They cannot be re-

pudiated so long as the binding force of any Treaty obligations made in the past is admitted. The honour of England is committed to the acceptance of them, and the nation certainly would never consent to a breach with France incurred in the support of what would be a plain infraction of Treaty right. It is quite conceivable that the Colonial Ministers should dislike to incur any responsibility in support of Treaty rights which they have no interest in upholding, and the cogency of which may be imperfectly understood by the population of Newfoundland. But their refusal to give us their co-operation in the matter does not relieve this country from the obligations which it has incurred. Lord Salisbury considers that Her Majesty's Government must take the shortest and plainest method of ascertaining what out international engagements in this matter are, and of carrying those engagements into effect. It appears to him that no time should now be lost in making proposals to the French Government which may lead to arbitration upon, at all events, the most urgent of the matters which are in contest between them. It is hardly to be hoped that this process can be complete before the ensuing fishing season commences. It may be therefore necessary to conclude some intermediate arrangement, which probably would follow the lines of the arrangement made last year, omitting those portions of it which have become inapplicable through the lapse of time. It will be necessary to apply to Parliament to obtain the powers for giving effect to any such arrangement; as it appears from the course of legal proceedings that there is at least doubt whether our officers, in taking steps for that purpose, would be adequately protected against an action at law. The Statute of the fifth year of George IV.'s Reign, which unfortunately was allowed to lapse, will probably furnish the best model for legislation upon this point, as it only aims at securing the performance of international obligations, and does not interfere with the international affairs of the island."

My Lords, I have at some length, but I hope at not too great length considering the importance and gravity of the subject, endeavoured to state the position of Her Majesty's Government, and I trust I have established three points to your satisfaction; the first is, that we have endeavoured in every way to ascertain the views and to meet the wishes of the Newfoundland Government, and to lighten their burdens as far as we could, consistently with the responsibility and obligations which have been imposed upon them and upon us for many years by these Treaties. Their views were fully ascertained; all their proposals were submitted to the French Government; and it was not until after the French Government refused to accept those proposals, and until after the Colonial Government and Legislature had refused to assist us, that we felt that we must take the matter into our own hands. In the second place, I trust I have satisfied your Lordships that it has now become necessary to settle and define the rights of the respective parties by arbitration, with the double advantage—first, that when the rights are clearly and distinctly defined, there is no danger, or very little danger, of collision. It is in the uncertainty of the extent and nature of rights that the danger of collision lies: neither party, when those rights have been defined, will desire to infringe them or refuse to recognise the obligation to perform them. And, secondly, the great advantage will result that when once the rights have been defined, the possibility of arriving at some compromise or settlement is largely increased. The third ground upon which I trust I have satisfied your Lordships is that, as the Newfoundland Government have declined to legislate to secure a *modus vivendi* for next fishing season, we have no alternative in the interests of peace and order, and in the performance of our obligations, but to revive the powers which were given by the earlier Acts In truth, if we consider the case, we are in a worse position as regards the fishing season of 1891 than we were in with regard to the season of 1890, because, in the first place, those doubts to which I have referred have been raised as to the powers of naval officers; in the second place, the Colonial Government have now absolutely declined to assist us to secure the performance of the *modus vivendi;* and, finally, the situation has been lamentably aggravated by the inflammatory notice which has been circulated at three or four of the chief fishing places in Newfoundland, and the terms of which will be found in page 92 of C. 6256. I submit with confidence that the Government, therefore, had no option but to introduce this Bill, in which I have pointed out to your Lordships we have as far as possible preserved the independence of the Colonial Legislature by providing that should they now or or after the passing of this Act pass the necessary measures for giving due powers to the naval officers and securing the performance of the *modus vivendi*, and of our fishery engagements with France, then the Imperial Act will be suspended. I have to apologise to your Lordships for having occupied so much of your time, but I must again express my hope that, in consideration of the importance and the difficulty of the subject, you will not think that I have unduly trespassed upon your patience.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I am sure my noble Friend need have made no apology for the speech he has addressed to the House, both on account of the serious nature of the question, and also because he has very clearly and fully explained the situation to your Lordships. As my noble Friend is well aware, I being one of those who have had the honour of holding the seals of the Colonial Office, have myself not escaped from the necessity which every Colonial Minister has had of confronting the very serious difficulty there has always been in dealing with these rights of the French on the Newfoundland coast, and I need scarcely say that in common, I have no doubt, with my noble Friend and with all your Lordships, I feel great sympathy with the people of Newfoundland in the position in which they find themselves. These Treaties were made at a time when the condition of Newfoundland was wholly different. I will not attempt, especially at this time of the evening, to go into the various points which have been so well explained by my noble Friend, but perhaps the most important question of all, except the immediate difficulty of the lobster fisheries, is the fact that this portion of the coast which contains, as my noble Friend has said, valuable minerals, has been lately settled, and that a state of things has arisen which has really become almost intolerable. I think, speaking from memory, I was the Minister who advised the appointment of Magistrates on that coast, and I remember that that was not agreed to without very considerable difficulty and hesitation. Up to that time there was, in fact, no authority to enforce order or law among the inhabitants on the coast. That jurisdiction has, however, since been exercised and has been a very great benefit. But everybody must see that the state of things existing on that coast, with the growing population, cannot possibly be allowed to continue. On the other hand, to find a solution of the difficulty has puzzled Minister after Minister. As long ago as when I was Under Secretary at the Foreign Office we were engaged in negotiations with the French on this subject, and Commission after Commission has been issued, and inquiry after inquiry has taken place—I myself negotiated personally with a representative sent over with the French Government—but all has been in vain. We have now arrived at a point at which I agree with my noble Friend—unfortunate as it is—some decided action on the part of Her Majesty's Government has become unavoidable; and I cannot help feeling at the same time, as I am sure he feels, extreme regret that it has become necessary to use the undoubted power of the Imperial Parliament for the purpose of enforcing the law by an Imperial Act in a colony which is possessed of Representative Institutions, and has itself the power of passing the necessary laws for carrying into effect the Treaties which have been entered into by the Crown. There are two remarks which may be made in defence of such a step as regards the colony—I am not speaking now of our relations with France. In the first place these Treaties are all of very old date; they were all in existence at the time when responsible government was given to the colony, and the colony has exercised its rights subject to those Treaties. It cannot, therefore, be said that we are now using the power of the Imperial Parliament to interfere with the rights of the colony, because rights of the colony as against those Treaties never did and never could exist. It is perfectly manifest that as long as the colony forms a part of the Empire, and as long as the right to conclude Treaties is vested in the Crown, so long must there rest on the part of the colony the responsibility of passing laws to enforce those Treaties which are as binding upon the colony as upon us at home. But when there is a state of feeling like this existing in the colony, there is no alternative if we are bound by Treaty obligations to a foreign Power but for the Imperial Parliament to take care that as we have entered into those Treaty obligations they shall be observed. And that, I apprehend, is the defence upon which Her Majesty's Government rest. I need not enter into the particulars of the agreement. I quite think it will be a wise step to decide in the first place the question of the lobster fisheries, and in the next to open a door to the settlement by arbitration of all possible questions which may arise under those Treaties. This I feel bound to say: that my noble Friend has not spoken too strongly of the extraordinary tact and good sense displayed by the naval commanders on both sides for a long series of years in avoiding a collision which might have occurred at any time, and it seems to me almost incredible that there should be no naval officer, either French or English, guilty of any indiscretion by which a collision might have been brought about. That must be said in full recognition of the friendly disposition of the French nation and Government, because without that feeling and, of course, instructions due to it, their officers out in Newfoundland would not have been able to deal as they have with so delicate a situation. It is only just to the French Government to say that in the Papers which have been laid before your Lordships' House it appears plainly that the spirit in which they have met Her Majesty's Government has been of an essentially friendly nature, and that, being the case, there ought, I think, to be no difficulty now in arriving at a friendly solution. I feel confident that the Newfoundlanders, when they look at the circumstances, and reflect upon the whole situation, will see, as everyone in this country must see, that we cannot set aside our plain Treaty obligations with another Power, and they will, I believe, now, at the last moment, recognise that it is their duty calmly to wait until the issue of these negotiations is fully seen. I earnestly trust that will be the case. At present they certainly have given a very strong refusal to the appeal made to them by Her Majesty's Government; but I think they will see that any action on their part which would aggravate the situation, cannot redound to their own interests or to the benefit of the colony. I should be very sorry indeed to appear to utter, even as a private individual, any threat towards the colony, but I do not feel it altogether wrong to point out to them what the position of affairs would have been if we had not the power or disposition to enforce a Treaty between the Imperial Government and a friendly Power. Might not the French Government then have said:—"If the English Government refuse to enforce their obligation, are not we ourselves justified in enforcing the obligations under the Treaty?" And apart from the extremely serious questions which would arise, and which it would be for Her Majesty's Government to deal with, I would ask whether the Newfoundlanders would not be placed in a position which would involve great hardship upon them and injury to the colony. Upon every ground, therefore, I think they ought fairly to await the issue of the negotiations in the full confidence that Her Majesty's Government will, as I am sure they will, do their best to preserve all the rights which the colony can really claim under the Treaty, and afterwards, when those rights are ascertained, to arrive at a friendly compromise with the French Government, which will relieve the colony from the difficulties in which they are placed. I agree with my noble Friend that it is first important to ascertain what those rights are. They have been constantly disputed. The French have held one view, we have held another, and it is impossible to find any solution of the difficulty until they are ascertained. I, therefore, for these reasons, welcome this reference; I welcome it because I think it is a proper and friendly mode of dealing with a question of this kind between two friendly Powers; and I welcome it as a means to a settlement of the meaning of the Treaties. This is not, as I apprehend it, an arbitration for the purpose of taking away from Newfoundland, or for their giving up any rights they may possess. Arbitrations very often take the form of questions what, on one side or other, is to be given up; sometimes each side gives up something if the arbitrator so decides to the other; sometimes the decision is that a portion of the rights belonging to, or claimed by, one party shall be given up to the other party. But this arbitration — and I think the Newfoundlanders ought to weigh that well—is not of that nature; it is for the purpose of ascertaining by an impartial examination what is the true interpretation to be given to the Treaty obligations which we have entered into. That having been ascertained there will remain, of course, the further question which may be left to be considered afterwards—what solution can be found for the whole difficulty. As a preliminary step nothing could be better than arbitration to ascertain the meaning of the Treaty. With regard to the *modus vivendi*, after the explanation which has been given by the noble Lord, it is not necessary at present to say anything further; it is sufficient to say that there must be a *modus vivendi*, and that there must be power to enforce it during the negotiations. That seems to me to be the justification for this Bill. I should be most ready to find fault with it in the interests of the colony if I thought there was reason for it, but I do not. I have not yet seen the particular stipulations in it, nor do I know what the precise provisions of the Act of George IV. may have been; but, speaking generally, I have no hesitation in saying that deeply as I regret that the necessity should have arisen, I cannot see how it was possible to avoid interference by the Imperial Legislature for this particular and most important purpose.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, the noble Lord who has just spoken has, in responding, dealt with this question in so candid and patriotic a spirit that it is quite unnecessary for me to add any words further than to say that I am glad, not only that he generally approves of the policy we have pursued, but that he spoke in the most sympathetic manner of the position of the colonists. I feel that they deserve every sympathy we can give them. They have been the sport of historic errors. It is an illustration of the continuity of the history of this country that we are now embarrassed and are paying the penalty of the deeds of Lord Bolingbroke, whom it did not suit to exact as strong terms as he might have exacted in the Treaty of Utrecht as against the French. The consequence was that these fishery rights were allowed to survive, with all the embarrassments they have brought with them. Once or twice in our subsequent history there was an opportunity when, without difficulty or strain, diplomacy might have removed this embarrassing chapter of our International Law. But it was not done. I believe that somebody appealed to Lord Castlereagh to make more satisfactory arrangements in 1815, but he replied that it would be inconsistent with the position of the French Government. It is impossible not to deeply pity these people, whose daily life and prospects of developing their industry in an inclement climate are subject to such difficult conditions, and who have been the sport of the errors of former statesmen. But of late years, ever since Lord Palmerston began these negotiations in 1834, statesmen of all schools and Parties have given their utmost efforts to bring about a satisfactory solution. Unfortunately, though it is impossible to speak otherwise than in terms of high appreciation of the tone and temper in which the French Government have dealt with the whole of this matter, still there is a strong feeling in France, not unconnected, I suspect, with their recollections of the past history of these countries, which makes it very difficult for any Government to obtain the slightest relaxation even of the more extreme and unreasonable claims which from time to time have been put forward by France. Therefore the negotiations have struggled on, what with the feeling of the colonists on the one hand and the claims of France on the other, under quite insuperable difficulties. In 1878, when the present French Ambassador was the Prime Minister of France, and I was holding the office which I hold at present, we sketched out what we hoped might be a reasonable compromise, selecting particular parts of the colony in which the French might enjoy freer rights, and releasing from those rights with entire freedom to the inhabitants all those parts of the coast in which it was thought that mineral or other sources of improvement might lie. We did not pursue it, we merely sketched out the idea; but it was taken up by our successors. Lord Granville pursued it—I do not know the details of the negotiation—for five years; and in 1885, when I succeeded him again, I found that he had succeeded in effecting a most equitable and satisfactory arrangement. It fell to my lot to give the signature to it, but it was a Treaty negotiated by him. Most unfortunately, I think, the Colonial Government were persuaded in a political crisis, under the influence of electors new to political power and scarcely cognisant of the responsibility attached to their action, not to avail themselves of that opportunity, and they rejected that Treaty. It was a golden opportunity lost, and I am afraid for ever. Since that time we have struggled on as best we could, and I think if that unfortunate animal, the lobster, had not interposed its claws between us we might still have got on; but with the lobster industry sprang up a pile of insoluble questions, bringing together sharply opposed interests, exposing us every year and every day of the fishing season to the risk of dangerous collisions. Because, my Lords, though the tact of our naval officers has been very great—they deserve every word that has been said of them—and though we can rely upon them to the utmost, still it was impossible not to feel but that at any time an ugly blow might have been given, or that something might have been done on one side or on the other by which the honour of the flag might have been imperilled. We know how easily the feelings of nations are aroused, and it was difficult to look without grave apprehension at the future such eventualities might involve. I think the colonists have lost sight of some of the most important considerations which should guide them, but it is fair to say that they have been very much pressed by material suffering; their fishing seasons have been unfortunate; their climate has been unusually severe; and they have shared in that depression of trade which has for some years affected the world. Therefore, I think they have judged too hardly and hastily of the existing situation. Judging from some utterances that I have seen of—I am sorry to say—responsible people, they seem to imagine that the embarrassments with which they are struggling are part of the result of their loyalty to the Queen and of their connection with this country. That is a great mistake. I do not for a moment suggest that there is the slightest probability or chance of a realisation of those utterances by which their political position would be modified; but I only say it is a great mistake to imagine that this difficulty with France would be in the slightest degree affected if they were now at liberty to tender their allegiance to any Sovereign or State in the world. The rights of the French would attach to that part of the coast under whatever allegiance they might rest. I think it right to say this, because of the wild language which I have seen has been used by some persons in the colony. I do not, however, believe that from the mass of the colonists any unreasonable conduct is to be apprehended. I think that when they see the question discussed, as it must be in this and the other House of Parliament, and when they see that their rights are subjected to the judgment of an impartial Commission, and that all we desire to do is not to modify or alter their status in any degree but merely to ascertain what that *status* really is before a tribunal of International Law, I feel certain that they will recognise the sympathy and the sincere desire which animates every school and Party of English politicians, and that they will co-operate with us in solving one of the most difficult international problems that has ever perplexed succeeding Governments, and will aid us in restoring to the utmost extent we can—and we have shown that we are ready to make considerable sacrifices for that purpose—that prosperity and plenty which no one desires more earnestly for them than the statesmen and the Legislature of this country.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: If I may be allowed to speak again I would ask the noble Lord the Secretary for the Colonies one question—I have no doubt he will answer it in the affirmative—that is, whether the colonists will have full opportunity of representing their views before the Commission? No doubt that is intended, but it would be more satisfactory to hear the statement from his lips.

*LORD KNUTSFORD: Not only will they have full opportunity of bringing their views before the Arbitrators, but we have telegraphed out to know whether they desire to have as one of the delegates some one who has the confidence of the Colonial Ministry. We have not yet received an answer.

Bill presented; read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 76.)

STATUTE LAW REVISION BILL [H.L.]

A Bill for further promoting the revision of the Statute Law by repealing enactments which have ceased to be in force or have become unnecessary—Was presented by the Lord Chancellor; read 1^a; and to be printed. (No. 77.)

House adjourned during pleasure.

House resumed: The Lord Foxford (*E. Limerick*)—chosen Speaker.

House adjourned at five minutes before Twelve o'clock, till To-morrow, a quarter past Ten o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 19th March, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

INDIAN ARMY OFFICERS' PRIVILEGE LEAVE.

Mr. KING (Hull, Central): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India (1) whether it is customary to allow officers of the Indian Army 90 days' privilege leave, of which they avail themselves to make brief visits to the United Kingdom; (2) whether it is usual to count the 90 days from the day when the officer leaves the station where he is serving, wherever it may be situated in any part of India or Burma, the difference in some cases between Bombay—the necessary point of departure from India for so short an absence—and many of the stations, varying from two or three days to three weeks or over in going and returning; (3) whether, having regard to the fact that officers in the Bombay Army, stationed in or near the City of Bombay, have a great advantage over officers in up-country stations, or in Madras, Bengal, and Burma, the Secretary of State will consider the advisability of recommending to the Indian Government that in the case of privilege leave for 90 days, the leave shall count from the date of embarkation for England at the port of Bombay, regulations being framed as to the additional time to be allowed from the various stations or districts to the port of embarkation; and (4) whether, as the season for leave is rapidly approaching, an early intimation can be given to that effect?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for INDIA (Sir J. Gorst, Chatham): The answer to Questions 1 and 2 is in the affirmative; and, with regard to Questions 3 and 4, I have to say that the Secretary of State is not prepared to take any action in the matter.

THE ARREST OF CAPTAIN DRURY.

Mr. KING: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the attention of the Secretary of State has been directed to the fact that Captain Drury, of the 3rd Goorkha Regiment, serving in Burma, has been kept under arrest for more than 10 weeks without being brought to trial, and whether this is in contravention of the Queen's Regulations; whether it is true, as stated in a recent telegram to the *Times*, that Captain Drury has been kept under arrest at the instance of high civilian authorities, on the ground that he has refused to apologise for a communication which he is charged with having forwarded to the *Rangoon Times*, and whether he does not deny having made any such communication; whether he has asked to be brought to trial, and why his requested is refused; whether he has now been released without any explanation being offered, and without being brought to trial; and whether he will be compensated?

*Sir J. GORST: The Secretary of State has no official information with regard to Captain Drury, who belongs to the 2nd, and not the 3rd Goorkhas. I have, however, observed from the reports in the ordinary channels of information that Captain Drury has been released.

Mr. KING: May I ask whether he has any chance of obtaining compensation?

[No answer was returned.]

MILITARY FURLOUGH RULES IN INDIA.

Mr. KING: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India (1) whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that by the Military Furlough Rules of November, 1868, it was provided that all officers who entered the Staff Corps after that date were promised that if they would enter the service of the Indian Government they should receive, when on furlough, half pay "calculated at the rate of 2s. for every rupee;" that between November, 1868, and July, 1871, a considerable number of officers were drawn into the Indian Staff Corps from the British Service by the promise of this and other advantages; and that in July, 1871, the rule was altered, and for the words above quoted were substituted the words "at the current rate of exchange;" (2) whether it is usual, or was intended to give this rule an *ex post facto* operation; (3) can he explain why, since 1871, the Indian Government has refused to fulfil to officers who entered the Staff Corps between 1868 and 1871 the promise contained in the rule of 1868; whether on the other hand some officers who had joined the Staff Corps previously to November, 1868, have been granted the benefits of the rule of that date, on the ground that they had elected that rule, or on any other ground; (4) and whether the Secretary of State has ruled that officers to whom the promise was directly held out as an inducement to join the Service are to receive less favoured treatment than officers who were already in the Service when the rule was made; and, if so, whether he will re-consider that ruling?

*Sir J. GORST: The answer to the first question of the hon. Member is in the affirmative. The answer to the second question is that it is not an *ex post facto* operation, but an operation on those officers who joined the Staff Corps between 1868 and 1871. As to questions number 3 and 4, I have to say that the ground of distinction between the two classes of officers is that one had elected the Rules of 1868, having the option to do so or not, while the other had no such option. The answer to the last question of the hon. Member is that the question has been repeatedly decided by successive Secretaries of State in Council, and as no new facts have been adduced, the Secretary of State does not consider that he would be warranted in disturbing their decision.

ILLITERATE VOTERS.

Mr. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can state the number of electors who voted in Parliamentary Elections as illiterates, and their percentage to the total vote, from the conclusion of the General Election, 1886, to the end of February, 1891?

The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): I have not this information in my possession, and it might be difficult to obtain it without an order of the House calling for a Return. The two Returns of 1885 and 1886 were made subsequently to a General Election. If my hon. Friend presses for a Return as to by-elections at the present moment, I should have no objection to assenting to such a Return as he asks for.

COMMISSIONS TO ARMY AGENTS.

Mr. MAC NEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any, and, if so, what steps have been taken to recover a sum of £294 5s. improperly paid by the Accountant General of the Army to Messrs. Cox and Co., bankers, as commission to that firm in their capacity as agents of the East Surrey Regiment, which item has already formed the subject of a Report by the Comptroller and Auditor General; and whether any application has yet been made to Messrs. Cox and Co. for the recovery of the sum in question?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): It is not usual to make disallowances beyond the period for which accounts are open. The circumstances of this peculiar case will be fully explained to the Committee on Public Accounts.

ON-LICENCES.

Mr. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he can inform the House what is the total number of on-licences in England and Wales; and what is the total number of premises in respect of which on-licences have been granted that are owned by brewers and by brewery companies?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Board of Inland Revenue that the latest statistics at present prepared in regard to on-licences in England and Wales are those which the hon. Member will find in Appendix XI. of the 33rd Report of the Commissioners of Inland Revenue.

DOCKYARD EMPLOYMENT.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty what is the limit of age for admission at

Chatham, Portsmouth, and Devonport Dockyards; whether a discharged soldier, with a pension and 21 years' service, of good health and character, 39 years old, was in February refused work at Chatham as "too old for consideration;" and whether, in view of the promise of the Government to consider the question of employment for reserve and discharged soldiers, he will undertake that such men are not refused work at Chatham in future?

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. FORWOOD, Lancashire, Ormskirk): In the unavoidable absence of my noble Friend the First Lord I will answer the question. The minimum age for the admission of hired men to Chatham, Portsmouth, and Devonport Dockyards is 21; there is no maximum age. A discharged soldier was refused admission at Chatham in February last as being "too old for consideration," but a further inquiry is being made in his case. Under existing regulations labourers are selected from the whole body of candidates who present themselves, and are not entered unless accustomed to labour and constitutionally capable of performing the duties required of them, and I do not consider it desirable to make any alteration in this practice.

UNEQUAL ASSESSMENTS.

MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that, at a large meeting of the St. James' Vestry held on 5th March, a numerous deputation of ratepayers attended as to the assessments made by the Assessment Committee, and a long debate took place; whether he is aware that it was alleged, and figures quoted to prove, that the assessments upon premises occupied by many members of the Committee had been lowered or kept at the same amount, while the assessments of adjoining or neighbouring premises, not occupied by members of the Committee, had been raised; whether the figures shown in the Valuation List books bear out this allegation; and whether he will cause an inquiry to be made, with a view to putting an end to the dissatisfaction which exists among many of the leading ratepayers in the parish?

Major Rasch

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I have communicated with the Vestry clerk on this subject, and have ascertained that at the meeting referred to a deputation of ratepayers attended, and made allegations to the effect stated in the question against the Committee of the Vestry, by whom the Valuation List for the parish was prepared. I am unable to say whether the figures in the list bear out these allegations, but I find that at the meeting the matter was referred to a Committee of the whole Vestry, and that this Committee have decided to recommend the Vestry to intimate to the deputation that the apparent anomalies to which attention has been called admit, in their opinion, of a legitimate and satisfactory explanation. Notice was given to each ratepayer of [the amount at which it was proposed that he should be assessed, and if he was aggrieved by the list he could object before the Assessment Committee of the Guardians, and, if necessary, appeal against their decision. I am informed, however, that the appeals were not more numerous than at the previous quinquennial revision, and that the surveyor of taxes, who was present at each meeting of the Assessment Committee of the Vestry, did not lodge any objection to the figures entered in the list. The Local Government Board are not empowered to interfere in the matter.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he has given any effect to the recommendation of the Select Committee on Friendly Societies, which reported, in 1889, with regard to the introduction of the principle of popular insurance for sickness and old age as one of the subjects of general instruction under the direction of the Department; and, in the contrary case, if he will now do so?

*THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): It is impossible to include such instruction in the obligatory subjects prescribed by the Code; but by the removal of all restrictions as to optional subjects, and by encouraging managers to submit for approval schemes of instructions on various topics, it is hoped that the recognition now generally accorded to the importance of provident insurance will lead to its being introduced into the school course to a much larger extent. The Department have also intimated that they would be prepared to accept reading books dealing with the subject in a manner suited to the capacity of young children.

MURDER OF MR. AND MRS. KEEBLE IN TONQUIN.

Mr. BEAUFOY (Lambeth, Kennington): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he has received any information as to the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Keeble in Tonquin in January last; and, if so, whether any steps have been taken to bring their murderers to justice?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): No information has been received by Her Majesty's Government beyond a statement in the French *Journal Officiel* of March 16th, but Her Majesty's Ambassador has been instructed to ask the French Government whether they can furnish any details.

IMPRISONMENT FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT.

Mr. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will give a Return, if moved for, of the names of the persons who were on the 1st January, 1891, in prison for contempt of Court, with the respective dates of their committal and the nature of their offence?

Mr. MATTHEWS: The Prison Authorities inform me that they have no means of supplying information as to the "nature" of the contempt of Court in the several cases; and I see no public advantage in giving the names of persons in such a Return. I am, therefore, unable to assent to this Return.

Mr. COBB: Will the right hon. Gentleman say how many persons are now in prison for contempt of Court?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I will obtain the information if the hon. Gentleman requires it.

NATIONAL PROVIDENT INSURANCE.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT: I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when a Bill will be introduced to deal with some at least of the recommendations of the Select Committee on National Provident Insurance which reported in 1887, and on Friendly Societies which reported in 1889, with a view to the advancement of their great work?

The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): My hon. and gallant Friend must be aware that one of the chief recommendations of the Select Committee which reported in 1887 as to the payment of a contribution towards a superannuation fund by persons in the Public Service has already been given effect to by the Police Act, 1890, and the Police (Scotland) Act, 1890, under which Statutes rateable deductions from pay are carried to the Police Pension Fund. The Committee reported, however, that they—

> "Were disposed to wait for the further development of public opinion . . . before advising the adoption of a general obligatory system of superannuated pay."

With regard to the Report of the Select Committee on Friendly Societies, delivered in 1889, a Bill is in preparation, and I hope will shortly be circulated, carrying into effect some of the Committee's recommendations affecting Collecting Societies and Industrial Assurance Companies.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL.

Mr. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the hon. Member for Penrith (Mr. J. W. Lowther) whether his attention has been called to articles in *Truth* and the *Daily Chronicle* of 12th February, and the *Daily News* of 11th March, containing serious charges against the administration of St. Paul's School; whether it is true, as stated to a Committee of the School Board for London by a deputation from the Fulham Vestry, on the 9th instant, that the standard of the entrance examination having been gradually raised so high as to exclude altogether the pupils from elementary schools, the Bursar of St. Paul's School, stated to be in partnership with the Head Master, has established a preparatory school as a private undertaking, which he designates "St. Paul's Preparatory School;" that many, if not all, boys seeking admission to St. Paul's School are sent by the Head Master to this preparatory school, from which he and the Bursar reap very large profits; that a new building has been erected by one or both of these gentlemen, at a cost of over £20,000, exactly opposite St. Paul's School, in the same style of architecture, and with a bust of Dean Colet, the Founder of St. Paul's School, in front of it, the words "St. Paul's Preparatory School" being also engraved in a prominent position; that the proprietors of this preparatory school send their pupils to compete for free places on the foundation, notwithstanding that the whole conduct of the examination is in their own hands, and that both gentlemen are present at the election of free scholars; and whether, if these statements are true, the Charity Commissioners have any authority to compel the School Authorities to conform to the scheme prepared by them for the school, or if any other Public Department has any control over the school?

MR. J. W. LOWTHER (Cumberland, Penrith): As I am only an intermittent reader of *Truth*, the *Daily Chronicle*, and the *Daily News*, the articles referred to have escaped my attention. The admission of boys from public elementary schools is not provided for by the scheme for St. Paul's School, which is one of a high grade. The other matters referred to do not come within the cognisance of the Charity Commissioners, who have no jurisdiction over private adventure schools.

NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' UNION.

MR. BROOKFIELD (Sussex, Rye): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether his attention has been called to an article appearing in the *Times* of Friday last on the subject of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union; whether the allegations therein contained as to grave malversations of the funds of the Union, and more especially as to improper diversions of the sick benefit funds for trade or Trades Union purposes, have also been brought to his notice; and whether the law in its present state affords any means of relief or redress to labouring men whose savings, contributed for the ordinary purposes of a sick benefit fund, have been applied without their consent to other purposes?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I am afraid that I can add little to the answer which my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer gave in reply to a question addressed to him on the 23rd ult. by the hon. and gallant Member for South-East Essex. The Trade Union Acts are based on the principle of a minimum of official interference. Clause 4 of the Act of 1871, 34 and 35 Vict., cap. 31, enacts that—

> "Nothing in this Act will enable any Court to entertain any legal proceeding instituted with the object of directly enforcing or recovering damages for the breach of any of the following agreements, namely, . . . 3. Any agreement for the application of the funds of a Trade Union (*a*) to provide benefits to members."

It appears, therefore, that the law in its present state affords no means of relief or redress in the circumstances referred to by my hon. Friend.

ART GALLERY AT SOUTH KENSINGTON.

SIR H. ROSCOE (Manchester, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is the case that an unknown donor has offered £80,000 to build an Art Gallery on a site at South Kensington, the erection of which would materially interfere with the purposes for which land was recently bought by Government for housing the Science Collections, and for the necessary erection of suitable chemical and physical laboratories in connection with the Royal School of Science; whether another site at South Kensington has been offered which would not interfere with the object for which Parliament granted the purchase-money for the land; and whether the Government will give an assurance that these objects will be maintained?

MR. GOSCHEN: It is true that a public-spirited gentleman has offered £80,000 to build an Art Gallery on a site at South Kensington; but with regard to the further points raised by the hon. Member, I may say at once that the offer only affects about one-tenth of the land recently bought by Government, and the remainder would still be left available, if required, for Science Collections. No pledge was given that the whole of the land would be appropriated to Science Collections. On the contrary, the Treasury, in accepting the offer of the Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition, stated that the land was in excess of even future requirements of the Science Collections. It would be possible to make adequate provision for chemical and physical laboratories on the land between the Imperial Institute Road and the Technical Institute. This site adjoins the east galleries, and it is in these galleries, together with the west and southern galleries, and a proposed cross gallery joining the east and west galleries, that the Science Collections may ultimately be housed. The interests of the Royal School of Science, and of the Science Collections, are being carefully kept in view; and the hon. Member will understand that the acceptance of this generous offer will enable us to provide adequate space for exhibition purposes more rapidly than would have been possible under the old scheme.

INQUESTS UPON FIRES.

MR. BROOKFIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the practice prevails in some parts of the United Kingdom of holding inquests as to the cause of fires which may have taken place; whether this practice has been attended with advantage in the City of London; and whether, in view of the large number of fires which now take place, he will carefully consider any measure which would require inquests to be held in all serious cases of fire throughout the Kingdom?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am not aware that this practice prevails elsewhere than in the City of London, where, as my hon. Friend is aware, it is authorised by a Private Act passed in 1888. Thirty-eight cases have been reported to me under this Act. In 30 cases the jury found the cause of the fire unknown; in seven cases they found that the cause was accidental; and in one case that the fire was caused by an unknown incendiary. I am informed, however, by the authorities of the City that in their belief the power to hold fire inquests acts as a deterrent against arson and fraud on Insurance Companies; and I am prepared to give my careful attention to any proposal which my hon. Friend may make in the direction of extending the measure throughout the country.

LICENSING—THE GLASGOW EAST END EXHIBITION.

MR. J. WILSON (Lanark, Govan): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that excisable liquors are sold in the Exhibitors' Club, within the Glasgow East End Exhibition; whether he is aware that a licence was refused by the Magistrates when the Exhibition was opened; and whether the sale of liquor in such circumstances is illegal?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): The Exhibitors' Club is a regularly constituted club, the members being exhibitors, attendants and other persons connected with the Exhibition. The Club has premises within the Exhibition buildings; and refreshments, including excisable liquors, are sold by the Club to its members and their guests in the manner usual in clubs. There is nothing illegal in this; and the fact that the Magistrates refused a certificate for licence for the sale of excisable liquors to the public in the Exhibition in no way prejudices the question.

LONDON JOINT STOCK BANKS.

MR. ATKINSON (Boston): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will allow other London Joint Stock Banks to tender for the business of Her Majesty's Government as well as the Bank of England?

*MR. GOSCHEN: If there were other Joint Stock Banks with capitals of £16,000,000 sterling, and if the Bank of England were unreasonable, the question of competition might arise, but I do not believe in the double event.

BRENNAN TORPEDOES.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many Brennan torpedoes are now constructed, how many is it proposed to construct, and what it is proposed to do with them when constructed?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: These torpedoes are for coast defence. My hon. and gallant Friend will scarcely expect a reply to the remainder of his question.

ADMIRAL MAYNE: Will the right hon. Gentleman state the number?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: Certainly not.

THE PADDY TAX IN CEYLON.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can lay upon the Table of the House the replies by, and the criticisms of, the different Government Agents in Ceylon on the Report of the Select Committee which lately sat in that Island to consider the question of the Paddy Tax; and whether, in case these replies have not been brought to his notice, he will cause them to be laid before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, with the view of enabling him to come to a correct decision in the matter?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The Papers in question have been received, and are being most fully considered. They will be included in any correspondence which may be laid before Parliament on the subject.

THE BOY MESSENGERS COMPANY.

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON (Herts, St. Alban's): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he is prepared to fix electric calls in the houses of such persons as may desire the same, without charge, as the District Messengers Company have done and are now doing, and to supply messengers to run errands and make small purchases; carry notes and parcels; call cabs, policemen in case of burglary, fire-engines in case of fire, &c.; and, if not, if he will consider favourably the Petition of the said company to carry on their business under a royalty to the Post Office, before depriving the public of this great and much-appreciated convenience?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): In reply to the noble Lord, I have to say that the Post Office will be prepared to supply electric call apparatus, but that a charge must necessarily be made for it. I do not suppose that the District Messengers Company can have had the intention of providing any such gratuitous service to the public as the noble Lord suggests, although it is not impossible that temporary advantages of this sort may have been offered to a few persons of influence. The business of the Department is the delivery of letters, parcels, and telegrams, and I have no inclination to interfere with any branches of the District Messenger service which do not infringe upon the province of the State.

MR. COBB: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, under the new postal system, announced in the morning papers of last Saturday, the Post Office propose to exclusively work the call system, or whether it is proposed that this system shall be worked by companies or persons under licences from the Post Office?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that it is not proposed to grant licences for the electric call system, and the Post Office will be prepared itself to meet the demands of the public in this matter.

MR. COBB: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that without a licence to use the call system the other business of these companies could not be carried on profitably, or indeed at all?

*MR. RAIKES: The companies which have engaged in this business have done so under express warnings from the Department that their business was illegal, and the warnings have been repeated in each case. As to how far a system of electric call may be applied to other business that does not fall properly within the business of the Department. I should be glad to consider what course the Department can take in regard to it.

MR. COBB: Will the right hon. Gentleman also consider this fact. The District Messengers Company are now working the call system under a promise of a licence, and the other company have applied for a similar licence. Will the right hon. Gentleman take that question into consideration and make an arrangement?

*MR. RAIKES: I am prepared to take into consideration any operations of the company outside that part of it which is within the jurisdiction of the Post Office; but no promise of a licence to any of these companies can be made for any business which is proper to the Post Office.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): What is the part of the business which the right hon. Gentleman considers to be outside the province of the Post

Office? Is it the carrying of letters, or the summoning of messengers to bring a cab or a policeman?

*MR. RAIKES: If the hon. Gentleman had listened to my answer he would have known that I have just answered that question. The business of the Department relates to the delivery of letters and messages.

DR. CAMERON: I beg to give notice that I will raise the question on going into Committee of Supply.

VISCOUNT GRIMSTON: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the abolition of the power on the part of the companies to carry parcels and letters will render the remainder of the business unremunerative and will entail a loss on the companies?

*MR. RAIKES: I do not know anything of the profits of the company. My business is to give effect to the law.

EYEMOUTH HARBOUR.

MR. MARJORIBANKS (Berwickshire): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can state if there is an early prospect of the negotiations between the Scotch Office, the Treasury, the Scottish Fishery Board, and the Public Works Loan Commission with regard to a further advance of £10,000 for the completion of Eyemouth Harbour being satisfactorily concluded, so that the necessary works may be now contracted for by the Harbour Trustees and carried into effect during the coming summer?

MR. JACKSON: The negotiations referred to have reached such a stage that I think I may say that a decision will be come to at such a date as not to preclude the Eyemouth Harbour Commissioners, in the event of its being favourable, from taking advantage of the coming season.

THE MAGAZINE RIFLE.

MR. MARJORIBANKS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the fact that the bolt-head of the magazine rifle placed by the Government at the United Service Institution has broken down; and, if so, what is the exact nature of the accident, and to what causes is it to be attributed; whether he will give directions for a rifle of the Mark II. pattern to be placed at the United Service Institution; and whether the War Office have placed any of the rifles Mark I. at the disposal of Foreign Governments, and to which Governments they have been sent?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The bolt-head of the magazine rifle at the United Service Institution has been broken by the unnecessary violence of a workman. I am not prepared to issue a rifle of Mark II. to the Institution at present. As regards the third question, I will explain privately to the right hon. Gentleman what has been done, but it is not a question which it is desirable to answer in the House.

CUSTOMS OUTDOOR OFFICERS.

SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the results of the recent inquiry held by him respecting the Outdoor Officers of Customs will be published?

MR. GOSCHEN: My Minute showing the results of the inquiry is in print and undergoing its final revise. I hope it may be published in a very short time.

VOLUNTEERS IN MERIONETHSHIRE.

MR. W. PRITCHARD MORGAN (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he has received any communications through the Lord Lieutenant of Merionethshire relating to a desire to form a battalion of Volunteers in that county; whether he has refused permission to establish such a battalion; whether he is aware that Colonel Liddel, the officer commanding the Militia in the district, has alluded to the difficulty he experiences in obtaining recruits, and has expressed the opinion that such difficulty would probably be overcome if a battalion of Volunteers were established; and whether, in view of the fact that there are no Volunteers in the county, he will re-consider his decision?

*MR. E. STANHOPE: The question is under my consideration, but I cannot say what the decision will be.

RECEIPTS FOR TELEGRAMS.

MR. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will consider the possibility of making arrangements for giving speedy receipts for telegrams on demand gratis; and whether he is aware that the amount at present charged for a receipt, and the delay in giving it, hinder many from obtaining this security for the safe despatch of their messages?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to say that I am not in a position to authorise the giving of receipts for telegrams without charge. As I have already announced in this House, I have considered the question of reducing the charge, but the Government did not see their way to agree to any reduction.

DISTRESS FOR UNION RELIEF.

MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether he is aware that it is the custom of Boards of Poor Law Guardians, by their relieving officers, to enter without process of law the dwelling houses of persons who have received union relief, and to remove and sell the furniture and other goods of such persons, and apply the proceeds towards the costs of their relief; and whether such practice is within the competence of Poor Law Guardians; and, if not, whether he will direct a Circular to be issued to Boards of Guardians pointing out the illegality of such proceedings?

*MR. RITCHIE: In the case of a person to whom relief has been granted by a Board of Guardians, the Guardians are not empowered to seize the furniture without any process of law. This is subject, however, to the enactment in the Poor Law Union Charges Amendment Act, 1849, under which in the case of a pauper dying and having in his possession or belonging to him any money or property, the Guardians of the union are empowered to reimburse themselves the expenses incurred by them in the burial of the pauper and in his maintenance at any time during the 12 months previous to the decease. I think that the Guardians under this enactment are empowered when they obtain possession of the furniture of a deceased pauper to sell it for the purpose of reimbursing themselves of the cost of his relief within the limitation referred to.

BETTING AND GAMBLING.

MR. MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I beg to ask the Secretary of

State for the Home Department if he will bring forward his Consolidation Bill on betting and gambling this Session, which he has told the House was already prepared?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am disposed to think that it will not be possible to find time for the Consolidation Bill on betting and gambling in the present Session, which is already too full. There are other measures prepared in the Home Office which are more urgent than the Bill to which my hon. Friend refers, and for which time may not improbably be wanting. I will, however, not lose sight of the subject.

PORTUGUESE IN AFRICA—SEIZURE OF THE *COUNTESS OF CARNARVON*.

DR. CAMERON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can give the House any information regarding the recent seizure of the steamship *Countess of Carnarvon* by the Portuguese in the River Limpopo?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: We have no information beyond that which has been published in the newspapers.

BANKRUPT TRUSTEES.

MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether it is competent for a bankrupt, whether discharged or undischarged, to act as trustee of charity lands; and whether a churchwarden, who is *ex officio* trustee, may act in that capacity if he be an undischarged bankrupt?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): Until removed by the Court a bankrupt can act as trustee; but under Section 147 of the Bankruptcy Act, 1883, the Court has power to remove a trustee, and has done so both in cases in which the bankrupt has obtained his discharge as well as in cases where he is undischarged. It is not quite clear whether the section applies to an *ex officio* trustee—as, for instance, a churchwarden; but in almost all cases charities are governed by schemes containing clauses which would give the Court jurisdiction to deal with the trustee in the event of bankruptcy.

METALLIFEROUS MINES.

MR. W. PRITCHARD MORGAN: I beg to ask the Attorney General whether, in view of the unsatisfactory and doubtful state of the law respecting the metalliferous mines of Great Britain and Ireland which contain base and precious metals in varied proportions and of varied values, and of the want of uniformity of the law in Her Majesty's possessions, the Government would support legislation which would make the law uniform, or, failing that, would alter the law so as to encourage (while maintaining the prerogative of the Crown) the development of the mineral resources of Great Britain and Ireland with profit to the owners of such mines and to the State?

SIR R. WEBSTER: In reply to the hon. Member's question, it is not possible for me to express any opinion as to the action of the Government until I have an opportunity of seeing any proposed Bill and considering the changes of the law thereby effected. I am not, however, at present prepared to recommend any alteration of the law in the direction indicated by the hon. Member, although Her Majesty's Government are very desirous of encouraging the development of the mineral resources of Great Britain and Ireland.

THE MARRIAGE LAWS.

MR. WOODALL (Hanley): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether his attention has been given to the Report of the Royal Commission on the Laws of Marriage, which was presented in 1868, and to the opinion expressed by that Commission that one uniform system was in the highest degree desirable; that the difficulties in the way of the attainment of that object were not insuperable; and that it was the duty of the State to make an earnest endeavour to overcome them; whether the Government will be prepared to give effect to the recommendation of the Commission that the State should be absolutely impartial and indifferent as between the members of all religious denominations, and should found its legislation as to marriage upon the necessity and duty of regulating its civil conditions and effects; and whether, to this end, the Government will consider the propriety of referring to a Select Committee the various proposals now before the House for altering the laws affecting the celebration and registration of marriages among Nonconformists, with instructions to consider the recommendations of the Royal Commission, and to obtain evidence from the Registrar General and others as to the operation of the laws proposed to be altered?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I have seen the Report of the Royal Commission on the Laws of Marriage, presented in 1868, and although it is doubtless desirable that the Laws of Marriage should be assimilated, yet, looking to the time that has elapsed since the Commission reported, it is evident that the subject is one of considerable difficulty. I am, therefore, unable to hold out any hopes that the Government, with a very limited time at their disposal, will be able to deal with the matter in the course of the present Session. With regard to the Bills now before the House for altering the laws affecting Nonconformist marriages, it will be for the House itself to decide, when the Bills reach the Committee stage, whether it is desirable that they should be referred to a Select Committee.

LABOUR QUESTIONS.

MR. ELLIOTT LEES (Oldham): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether any legislative action has yet been taken by any foreign Government to carry out any of the recommendations of the Berlin Conference upon Labour Questions?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I believe that some legislative action has been taken by foreign Governments; but the very short notice given me by the hon. Member has not been sufficient for me to ascertain all the facts of the case.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, for the convenience of Scotch Members, he will postpone the Motion for a Committee on the Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill until the latter part of the week after the Easter holiday?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: If the Motion is not taken before Easter, it shall not be taken till the Thursday after the Easter Holidays.

Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): What business will be taken on the next day and on Monday? Further, what date will be fixed for the Committee on the Civil Service Estimates?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I hope it will be possible to go into Committee on the Civil Service Estimates on Monday. To-morrow the Government hope to proceed with several of the Bills on the Paper.

Mr. KEAY: When will the Indian Councils Bill be taken?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am not yet in a position to say.

MALTESE LAW.

Mr. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the reference to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of certain disputed points in the law of Malta, which, as he recently stated, Her Majesty has been advised to make, is intended to be made by Her Majesty under the Act 3 & 4 Will. IV., c. 41, s. 4; or, if not, under what statute; and whether the Government will consider the propriety of advising Her Majesty to refer to the Judicial Committee under the above statute, or in such other way as may be legal and proper, the question of law as to the eligibility of Roman Catholics to the offices of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and Lord Chancellor of Great Britain?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: Her Majesty's Government do not think it advisable to propound this question to the Judicial Committee.

Mr. SUMMERS (Huddersfield): Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the first part of the question?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am not at present in the possession of information that would enable me to answer it. I do not look upon it as an urgent matter.

Mr. BRYCE: I beg to give notice that after Easter I will again ask the first part of the question.

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: The matter will be referred to the Judicial Committee with full assurance that they have authority to deal with it.

Mr. SUMMERS: Under what statute will the question be referred to the Privy Council?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I distinctly decline to state.

IRELAND — LAND COMMISSION, BALTINGLASS.

Mr. DONAL SULLIVAN (Westmeath, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has his attention been drawn to the fact that the appeal in the case of Thomas Metcalfe, tenant, Graves Cathrew, landlord, union of Baltinglass, County Wicklow, from the dismiss of his originating notice served 29th September, 1887, by order of 21st March 1890, has not yet been heard, and when it is likely to come on?

The CHIEF SECRETARY for IRELAND (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): The Land Commissioners report that the case referred to was dismissed by the Sub-Commission on the 8th May, 1890, on the ground that the tenant was not in *bonâ fide* occupation within the meaning of the Act. The appeal will be heard in its proper turn, but the Commissioners are unable at the present moment to name a day.

LAND COMMISSION, WESTMEATH.

Mr. TUITE (Westmeath, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware of the fact that the judicial rents in the cases of Philip Brady, Charles Fagan, and Anne Cooney, tenants, Captain Gerald Dease, landlord, heard at the sitting of the Westmeath Land Sub-Commission, held at Mullingar, 29th October, 1890, have not yet been fixed; and can he state the cause of the delay, and when the decisions may be expected?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that the facts are as stated in the first paragraph of the question, but it is probable that a decision will be pronounced early in April.

DISTRESS IN MAYO.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that great distress prevails in the parishes of Kiltimagh and Kilkelly, in the County of Mayo; whether it is his intention to mitigate the distress in these parishes by means of the relief works proposed to be started at Blackloon and Kilbeagh, in the same county; whether he is aware that the latter places are a long distance from the former two places; whether he can say how many hundreds of names the police have given as needing relief in Kilkelly and Kilmovee, and how many have been relieved in these places; and whether, considering the numbers in need of relief in Kilkelly and Kilmovee, he will consider the propriety of starting some relief works in that neighbourhood?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: I am sorry that I have not yet been able to obtain the information that would enable me to answer the question. The question only appeared on the Paper yesterday. Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will put it down for Monday.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I will repeat it on Monday.

COUNTY INSPECTOR BURKE.

Colonel WARING (Down, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether Mr. Myles Blake Burke has been compulsorily retired from the office of County Inspector, Royal Irish Constabulary, with a pension of £400 per annum, in consequence of alleged incapacity for further service; whether the injuries which caused such incapacity, if it existed, were received when on duty, and whether, if this be so, he would be entitled to £500 instead of £400 a year; and whether his Petition to Her Majesty to have his case re-considered has reached the Treasury through the Irish Government, to whom it was referred by Her Majesty's Command; and what course he intends to take with regard to it?

Mr. JACKSON: Mr. Burke was retired from the Constabulary on June 1st, 1887, on the ground that he had received injuries rendering him unfit for further service. His age was 61. The pension to which his service of 39 years entitled him was £386 15s.; but as he would have completed another year in the following September the Treasury awarded him £400 per annum, the amount for which a service of 40 years would have qualified him. The Treasury did not consider that the injuries which caused Mr. Burke's retirement were received when on duty. No Petition by Mr. Burke to Her Majesty has reached the Treasury.

DRUGS IN THE IRISH MILITARY HOSPITALS.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the intention of the War Office to throw open for public competition the contracts for the supply of pure drugs and medicines to the military hospitals in Ireland, in the same way as similar contracts are in England; and, if not, will he explain on what grounds?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: The recent competition for the supply of drugs and medicines had reference to the whole Army, including the Force in Ireland. The contract for the supplies in Ireland, estimated at about £1,700 a year, will, as a result of the competition, remain with the Apothecaries Hall at Dublin.

THE GWEEDORE UNION.

Mr. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Guardian of the Meenacladdy Electoral Division in Gweedore is a commercial traveller residing at Belfast; that one of the Guardians of the Magheraclogher Division in Gweedore is non-resident; that the Guardian of the Gweedore portion of the Dunlewey Electoral Division is non-resident; that the Guardian of the Gweedore portion of the Gortahork Electoral Division is non-resident; and that only one Guardian is resident, who is a land agent, and has no interest or concern with any electoral division but his own; and, consequently, the Poor Law Board is composed of representatives of the landlord interest; whether he is aware that Father M'Fadden repudiates the suggestion that he advised the people not to purchase seed, but that, on the contrary, he carefully explained to them the necessary procedure for obtaining seed, and in every way manifested a deep interest in the matter; whether, having regard to the constitution of the Board of Guardians, he can take any steps to secure to the district the benefits of the Seed Potato Act, of which they are now deprived; and whether he will take into consideration the great and widespread distress prevailing in the district, and speedily order necessary relief works to be started there?

Mr. A. J. BALFOUR: As this question appears on to-day's Paper without previous notice, time has not admitted of my obtaining a detailed Report. But from available information it appears that there are 10 electoral divisions in the Dunfanaghy Union, and that for six of these loans have been sanctioned to purchase seed potatoes. I am not aware that the Rev. James M'Fadden repudiates the suggestion referred to. The Guardians, I understand, have summoned a special meeting for the 21st inst., at which applications for loans for seed from the remaining four electoral divisions will be considered. The general condition of the district is receiving careful attention.

THE COLONIZATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

Mr. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling, &c.): I wish to ask a question of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in his capacity as Chairman of the Colonization Committee. I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has observed that in the *Times* newspaper yesterday there was published at great length what purported to be the official Report of the Colonization Committee; whether it was in fact the Report of the Committee, which only ceased its labours on the previous day; how the right hon. Gentleman accounts for the fact that a confidential document is published in a newspaper before it is in the hands of Members of the House; and what steps the right hon. Gentleman proposes to take in the matter?

Sir J. FERGUSSON: I was myself surprised to see the publication to which the right hon. Gentleman refers. The Report is not absolutely correct in regard to several paragraphs, which were only added at the last minute. I have no knowledge how it was furnished, and it is a breach of order on the part of any one to furnish the Report in such circumstances to a newspaper. I do not think that any Member of the Committee would do that. Perhaps it is hardly a matter to which serious attention need be called, but I am glad the right hon. Gentleman has addressed this question to me.

THE DIVISION ON THE WELSH LOCAL OPTION BILL.

Sir W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I wish, Sir, to ask you a question, as there is a slight error in the report of our proceedings yesterday. In the record of the Division that took place, the Noes are given as 179. If you add up the names of the Members as printed, they come to only 178. Is there any way of putting that right?

*Mr. SPEAKER: Perhaps the two gentlemen who acted as Tellers for the Noes may be able to explain.

Mr. J. M. MACLEAN: Sir C. Forster voted in the House without going into the Lobby.

Sir W. LAWSON: Sir C. Forster voted in the majority.

The matter dropped.

STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRADE, &c.

Ordered, That the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, have leave to print, and circulate with the Votes, the Minutes of their Proceedings from day to day; and to print, and circulate with the Votes, any amended Clauses of Bills committed to them from time to time.—(*Mr. G. Osborne Morgan.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to, Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill, without Amendment.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Bill read the third time, and passed.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 251.)

CONSIDERATION OF LORDS' AMENDMENTS.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Lords' Amendments be now considered."

(3.20.) Sir W. HARCOURT (Derby): I wish to ask what course the Government propose to take with reference to these Amendments generally. With regard to the first Amendment, which has reference to writs of *habere facias possessionem*, the Attorney General proposed a similar Amendment before the Bill went to the Lords. Objections were taken to the Amendment on both sides of the

House, and, after a good deal of discussion, it was withdrawn. It would be highly undesirable that this House should, by the withdrawal of the Amendment by the Government, be deprived of the opportunity of discussing this clause and of proposing an Amendment which would be unobjectionable. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will support us in rejecting this Amendment as it comes down from the Lords. The next principal Amendment introduces the entirely new element of land occupied rent free. Certainly, I think that is not a matter which the Government can consider necessary or desirable to be introduced into this Bill. On that subject I hope the right hon. Gentleman will state that he will not support a new proposition of such a character introduced at this stage of the measure. Next I come to the most important and most serious of all the Amendments sent down by the Lords. It is the one marked "C," and has reference to costs. The House will remember that one of the most contentious points in this Bill was the question of costs. We fought the matter out largely in this House, and it was the willingness of the right hon. Gentleman to make a concession on the question of costs that greatly facilitated the passage of the Bill. But for that concession it would not have passed through the House of Commons without a great deal more opposition. The principle adopted in the Bill and adhered to throughout was that there was to be no personal liability for costs, and everybody felt that costs ought to be reduced to their lowest possible measure, and that there should be no personal liability in respect of costs as the result of introducing the machinery of the County Courts. The Lords' Amendment entirely overthrows that, because it provides that the costs shall be recovered as in the case of an ordinary action in the County Courts. This result will be to overthrow the whole basis on which costs were settled in Committee of this House as long as they are declared to be costs by the County Court Judge. I would suggest to the Government that it is inadvisable to introduce into the Bill an alteration that would cause so much irritation as an alteration like this. It would be extremely irritating to the small tithe owners, especially in Wales. Therefore, I hope the Government will stand by the settlement made in the House of Commons, and will insist upon removing from the Bill one of the most irritating elements which can be introduced into it. I think the Government came to an honourable understanding with the opponents of the Bill that it should not be altered in this way. I am aware that these Amendments were not introduced by the Government in the House of Lords, but by persons who spread tares among the wheat, and I ask the Government to stand by the principle which they enunciated in the House of Commons, and to keep the Bill upon the footing on which it left this House by their consent and with their support.

*(4.26.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I hope the House will not be disposed to enter on this question into a general discussion of the Lords' Amendments, for I think the House will see that such a course would not be in accordance with the usual practice. But I am far from complaining of the course taken by the right hon. Gentleman in asking what the intentions of the Government are with regard to the three principal Amendments. The right hon. Gentleman says that the Government are not themselves responsible for these Amendments. I think they are all due to a noble and learned Lord, who has hitherto been spoken of in this House with the respect due to him, until the right hon. Gentleman—an old Colleague—compared him to a certain personage of whom the less that is said the better. The Amendments were introduced by Lord Selborne, and I think the House will be disposed to consider that they come from one who has given special attention to a subject of which he is practically master. With regard to the first Amendment to which the right hon. Gentleman calls attention, I cannot quite accept the account which the right hon. Gentleman has given of the action of the Government in this matter. The proposal which was made for an Amendment practically to the same effect was not in Committee, but on Report. That proposal was withdrawn in accordance with the general wish of the House; and

if it was intended to introduce another Amendment in the place of it in this House, it could only have been done by re-committing the Bill. Consequently, I do not think it can be fairly said that Her Majesty's Government, in accepting this Amendment, have in any way taken a step which is unfair to the House of Commons or which precludes the House of Commons from considering the subject. In another place it was contended that it would not be fair by the Bill to deprive the tithe owner of the remedy which the Act of 1836 already gave him. The Government agreed to the Amendment in the other House, and I am prepared to move that the House should agree with their Lordships in respect to it. The second important Amendment is intended to meet cases in which, as the Bill stands, the occupier has made such a bargain in regard to the rent as will have the effect of practically depriving the tithe owner of the tithe. Hon. Gentlemen below the Gangway very properly called my attention to this matter, which certainly had escaped notice. It was a matter which required to be dealt with, and Lord Selborne proposed the clause as a remedy. I therefore propose to ask the House to agree to the Amendment. I must say I think that the chances of attempted evasion of liability have been much increased by hon. Members drawing attention to what it was possible to do. The third important Amendment is on the question of costs. It proposes that the Court shall have power to order that any costs which it finds are vexatiously or oppressively occasioned be paid and recovered in the same manner as in any ordinary action in the Court, thus imposing a personal liability for costs which are vexatiously caused. I do not mean to say that strong reasons might not be given for this Amendment; but, at the same time, I have to recollect that throughout the Government have recommended the Bill to the House as one that does not impose any personal liability, either for tithe rent-charge itself or for costs incurred in the course of enforcing payment. On the whole, having regard to the objections which have been raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby, and the history of the proceedings on the subject of costs, I think it would be wise for the House to disagree with this Amendment.

(4.35.) Mr. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): It would, of course, be irregular at this stage to enter into details of the Amendments. We on this side rejoice at the decision of the Government with reference to the last Amendment referred to by the right hon. Gentleman. But with reference to the Amendment incorporated in Clause B, I think that requires further consideration. I hold that the way in which it has been dealt with in another place is most objectionable. As these Amendments were only circulated yesterday we have had scarcely any time in which to consider them, or in which to draw up any counter proposals that may be necessary. I hope the Government will give us further time to consider the matter.

Question put, and agreed to.

Lords' Amendments considered.

Amendments as far as the Amendment in page 1, line 11, agreed to.

Page 1, line 11, leave out from the word "but," to the word "he," in line 12, the next Amendment, read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."

*(4.38.) Mr. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): What is the object of leaving out these words?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: The House will recollect that when this clause was considered and a proviso inserted on the Motion of the hon. Member for Norfolk, I undertook that the omission of the proviso should be moved in another place in order to give an opportunity of considering the matter. One point included in the proviso was that where the tenancy terminates on March 25 or September 29, and the occupier is under a contract to pay the tithe which falls due on April 1 or October 1, he is not to be relieved of his liability to pay up to those dates, notwithstanding the expiry of his tenancy, and the omission of the words now proposed to be omitted will make this clear.

(4.39.) Mr. S. T. EVANS: I think this Amendment is more important than might be supposed from the mere words.

Surely the liability to pay tithe ought not to extend beyond the period of the tenancy?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The only effect of the omission of the words will be to make the tenants liable in cases where the tithe falls due only a few days after the expiry of his tenancy.

(4.40.) MR. S. T. EVANS: I am afraid the effect will be more wide-reaching. It will make the tenant liable to an indefinite extent for tithe after his contract has expired, and that will be a very dangerous proceeding indeed.

The House divided:—Ayes 149; Noes 99.—(Div. List, No. 92.)

Page 1, line 14, leave out the words "That tithe rent-charge," and insert the words "The tithe rent-charge which such occupier has contracted to pay," the next Amendment, read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."

(4.51.) MR. H. GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will give some explanation of this. I may be very obtuse, but I think this is a very complicated Amendment, and as we have only had it in our hands a few hours it is necessary for us to call on the right hon. Gentleman to explain the effect. I may be told that if I had followed the Debates in the other House I should have been able to understand; but I am not a frequent visitor to that place, nor do I carefully study the reports of its proceedings. If the right hon. Gentleman will give us some explanation I am sure the House will be much obliged.

*(4.53.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The intention of the Amendment is obvious.

(4.54.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon): I shall move the omission of the words "has contracted," and the insertion of words to make the clause read as follows: "Which such occupier is liable under the said contract to pay."

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I hope the hon. Member will not press that.

(4.55.) SIR W. HARCOURT: I do not see why the Government should object to that. It is much simpler than the present form.

Amendment to Lords' Amendment to omit the words "has contracted," and to insert the words "is liable under the said contract," put, and agreed to.

(4.56.) Lords' Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Lords' Amendment, page 1, line 16, to leave out from the word "rent-charge," to the word "provided," in line 18, the next Amendment, read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."

(4.57.) MR. S. T. EVANS: I do not see any reason for the omission of these words. They were accepted upon my Motion, and I hope the Government will stick to them. One of the chief reasons why the Lords struck out the words was that they objected to the tithe being ear-marked. Now I contend that the tithe should be ear-marked in order to enable the tenant to see that he is not called upon by the new statutory contract to pay a sum which he was not under a liability to pay before. The object of these words is very evident. Let me put a case before the House. Suppose a tithe rent-charge of £5 is by the fall in the value of corn reduced to £4 10s., how is the tenant to know he is not called upon to pay more than he was liable for under the old contract? A very high authority in the other House, no less an authority than the Prime Minister himself, said it was of the utmost necessity to keep the tenant in the dark as to what he will be called upon to pay. But although we are always willing to listen to the recommendations of the Prime Minister, I think the House will agree with me that people who are placed under certain obligations by Act of Parliament should know the exact extent of these obligations. Yet the object in omitting these words is to keep the tenant in the dark.

*MR. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I hope the House will disagree with this Amendment.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I would point out to the House that the Amendment was inserted on the Motion of no less an authority than Lord Herschell, whom I certainly should prefer to the hon. Member for Glamorganshire (Mr. S. Evans). I do not think, however, that very great importance need be attached to it, and, therefore, I shall not object to the House disagreeing with the Amendment.

(5.2.) VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): I hope the House will not disagree with this Amendment, as I think the Lords did quite right in omitting the words they have struck out. I do not believe that the effect of it will be that any occupier in Wales will be left in the dark, as has been suggested, and certainly no hardship can attach to the occupier if these words are omitted. I would, therefore, suggest that the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade should adhere to the Amendment made by their Lordships.

*MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I am glad to find from what the right hon. Gentleman has just said that he admits the existence of what I regard as a distinct understanding come to in this House when the matter was before it. It would appear that the real object of the Lords was to disguise the payment of an unpopular charge.

*MR. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): I will point out that unless this Amendment of the Lords' is passed, it might happen that a landlord giving a receipt for this charge without stating the fact would thereby render the receipt bad in law; and there being no legal voucher that the money had been paid, it might have to be paid over again.

MR. H. GARDNER: For my part, I hope the right hon. Gentleman will adhere to the statement he has just made, and not insist upon the Lords' Amendment.

*MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I cannot understand why it is that hon. Members opposite, after the Government have given way, should persist in forcing the Lords' Amendment upon us. For what reason do they object to the receipts setting forth distinctly what the money is paid for? I should think there must be something absolutely dishonest in the mind of a man who refuses to say what he gives a receipt for.

Question put, and negatived.

MR. S. T. EVANS: I have an Amendment which, as the time has been very limited, I have been unable to place upon the Paper. I propose, in order to carry out still further the recommendation of Lord Herschell, to add, after the words "rent-charge," in line 17, "and the occupier shall not be liable to pay except on such receipt being given to him by the owner." This, I think, will supply all that is necessary in regard to this matter.

Amendment proposed,

At the end of the words restored to the Bill, to insert the words "and the occupier shall not be liable to pay except upon such receipt being given to him by the owner." — (*Mr. Samuel Evans.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I hope the hon. Member will not press this Motion. There is quite sufficient in the clause as it stands to show that the money is paid in respect of tithe rent-charge, and to stamp the obligation resting on the person receiving the money. As was pointed out in Committee, the object was not to alter the liability, but to direct that the landlord should ear-mark or stamp the amount received for tithe rent-charge. I think it is hardly fair now to alter the provision in the way proposed by the hon. Member.

Question put, and negatived.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 26, to leave out from the word "by," to the end of the Clause, and insert the words—

"Sections eighty-one and eighty-five of the Act of the Session of the sixth and seventh years of the reign of King William the Fourth, chapter seventy-one, and the enactments amending those sections, and not otherwise,"

the next Amendment, read a second time.

(5.12.) MR. S. T. EVANS: The whole of Section 1 was struck out by the Lords in order to insert quite a new remedy, enabling the landlord to distrain for his tithes, or rather the words were re-inserted in an altered form. I want to point out that that alteration is a very serious one. The words were originally "by distress in like manner as provided by the Tithes Act." The Lords referred to two sections of the Act of 1836, namely, Sections 81 and 85. I have no objection to the words as they stand if they are confined to Section 81, but I think the words in Section 85 ought to be omitted. I have a strong reason for this. Section 81 enables the tithe owner to distrain for tithe after giving the usual 21 days' notice; and it goes further, because it provides that whenever any rent-charge payable under the Act shall be in arrear on part of the land situate in the parish in which the rent-charge is due, and which shall be occupied by the person holding the land for which the rent-charge is made, the landlord may distrain upon land which is the property of the occupier. The result would be that where a man farms under a landlord, and holds property of his own, if this section remains unaltered the landlord will be allowed to distrain not only in respect of his own property, but also on the land of the tenant; whereas the tithe the tenant has contracted is only in respect of the land he occupies as tenant. I say that the landlord ought not to be allowed to distrain on any land but his own. I do not propose to proceed with the Amendment I had intended to move if the Government will consent to strike out the words "and Section 85."

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I think the House will see that the hon. Member proposes to deprive the landlord of a part of his right. The hon. Member wishes that the landlord should not have the power formerly conferred upon the tithe owner. That is contrary to the position we have always taken up. We did not accept the suggestion made in the other House of increasing that right by giving the landlord the same right of recovery in the case of tithe rent-charge as in the case of rent. I would ask the House to sustain us in the position we have assumed from the beginning of the Bill.

*(5.17.) MR. C. W. GRAY: If the right hon. Gentleman charges us with inconsistency in respect of certain changes made in the Bill, I would point out to him that to do so is to use a double-edged weapon. Several matters have been thought of by hon. Members since the Bill left this House, and we claim that if we see a point which is relevant to some Amendment coming from the other House, we have a perfect right to raise that point, although we may not have seen it when the Bill was discussed here before. As far as I can understand, we are asked to give the landlord exceptional powers. ["No!"] If we are not, then we have nothing to complain of. But are we not going to give the landlord the power which the tithe owner has only had?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Yes.

*MR. C. W. GRAY: But the landlord is to have power not only to distrain on his own land, but also upon other land which the tenant may hold as a yeoman farmer; and if it is proposed to confer that power on the landlord, I shall do all I can to defeat it.

*(5.20.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: It seems to me that the power which is conferred on the landlord is unjust, and the fact that it is conferred by the Act of 1836 does not make it less unjust. I shall certainly support the hon. Member's Amendment.

*(5.21.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I think it would be far better to have the Lords' Amendment as it is. At present, if the occupier does not pay the tithe rent-charge, the owner may distrain upon the land out of which the tithe issues, and also on any other land within the parish of which the occupier is the owner, or which he holds under the same landlord. This Bill proposes that the occupier shall no longer pay the tithe rent-charge, but that the landlord shall pay it, and it gives the landlord identically the same powers as the tithe owner possessed, so that the occupier is in no worse position, while the landlord is in a worse, and not a better, position, because he has no general powers of recovery, but only those which the tithe owner had before.

(5.24.) MR. H. GARDNER: I would point out to the hon. Member that this proposal vitally touches the interests of the occupiers, and hon. Gentlemen opposite who are concerned in this question purely from the agricultural point of view will vote with us on this occasion.

*MR. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. Member, but he has already spoken.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Mr. Speaker——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member has also spoken. I wish to point out to hon. Members that the proper time to move an Amendment is before I put the Question "That the House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment." Under the circumstances, I will regard the Question as not put.

(5.27.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I beg to move the omission of the words "and eighty-five" so that I shall be in Order. I would point out that the Lords' Amendment would impose a practical hardship. A yeoman farmer may have contracted debts for seeds, manure, and stock, or may have borrowed capital to cultivate his own farm, giving a bill of sale. As a distraint for rent takes precedence of all other debts, the landlord would be able to distrain on the yeoman farmer's land in respect of tithe issuing from other land he holds under that landlord, and not only the yeoman farmer, but his creditors, would suffer. The effect of the section, if adopted, would be to discourage cultivation.

Amendment proposed to the said Amendment, to leave out the words "and eighty-five."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'and eighty-five' stand part of the Amendment."

*(5.29.) VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I would willingly regard the tithe rent-charge as part of the rent which the tenant pays to the landlord, but the House has decided that it will make a distinction. I hold that the landlord should have exactly the same power to recover from the occupier which the tithe owner has at present. It is quite evident that the landlord ought to have the same power of recovery from the occupier as the tithe owner has now. It has been said that some of us on this side of the House never speak except in the interests of the Church. This proposal has nothing whatever to do with the interests of the Church, but it would, I think, be very unfair to the landowner.

*(5.32.) MR. C. T. DYKE ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston): The noble Lord has omitted to observe one point in Clause 85 of the old Act. I think it is clear from the wording of that clause that the intention was that the person paying the tithe in respect of one holding should be one person only, and if a yeoman should be liable in respect of the whole of his occupation, though part of it might belong to another owner. What we are now discussing is his liability for tithe as a tenant only. The whole question now is whether the landlord shall have the power to recover the tithe from land in respect of which he has not paid any tithe.

MR. H. R. FARQUHARSON (Dorset, W.): I think the landlords suffer so many injustices under this Bill that an extra one more or less will not make much difference. But the small yeomen of the country will be immensely surprised if they find landlords can not only distrain upon their own property, but also upon the yeoman's property. If any landlord sitting upon the Conservative side of the House made such a proposition, it would be a very remarkable thing if he found his way to the House again, supposing he had a single yeoman in his constituency. There will be endless complications. Who is going to say which is the tithe and which the rent? Take the case of a man paying £100 a year for rent and tithe. Suppose he has paid £75 on account and the landlord says, "The £25 balance is tithe, and I am going to distrain on your freehold for it." The tenant will say, "Not a bit of it; one of the three £25 which made up the £75 was for tithe, and therefore you cannot distrain upon my land." I believe if this Amendment is not carried it will give rise to endless difficulties, the presence of which will afford solid ground for the landlords looking to the House for compensation in respect of its action in the matter.

*(5.35.) MR. STUART RENDEL (Montgomeryshire): I can assure the noble Lord opposite that we entirely acquit him of the charge that he never rises to speak except in the interests of the Church. We admit that he occasionally speaks in the interest of the landlord. I think that on the present occasion he has transferred his advocacy from the Church to the landlord, because I understood him to say that he thought it obviously just that any power the tithe owner might have for the recovery of the tithe should now be vested in the landlord as against anybody else. I cannot realise the justice of that proposition at all. I have always understood that the tithe was a charge primarily on the land. It does not seem to me that because a man collects that charge by deputy the latter is to have against somebody else precisely the same rights as the tithe owner had against him. The proposition of my

hon. Friend is that Clause 85 should not apply to the present case, and that the landowners should not have the extreme statutory right as against the occupier, which the tithe owner enjoys under the Act of 1836 as against the landowner.

(5.37.) CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): May I ask whether there is no distinction between this case and the case of a landlord who distrains on his tenant in the ordinary way? If the landlord is to be allowed to distrain on the land of a yeoman I would point out that the tithe upon that land will probably have already been paid. I should be very much indisposed to support this Amendment of the Lords in any case; but if the view I take of the matter is the correct one, I shall certainly not support the Amendment.

(5.38.) SIR R. WEBSTER: I must say that in regard to the course of the previous discussion and the understanding between the two sides of the House, I shall be indeed surprised if the majority of the House should come to the conclusion that the clause ought to deprive the landlord of his remedy when he has paid the tithe which the tenant ought to pay. Last year we introduced a provision that where the landlord paid the tithe himself it should be treated as rent as between the landlord and tenant. The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt) said this would be an unfair thing, because at present the tithepayer is only liable to be distrained upon under the Act of 1836. The right hon. Gentleman and others pressed us to give the landlord, who has paid the tithe, the same remedy as though he was the tithe owner, and no other remedy. That principle we accepted. We were pressed by the hon. Member for Stockport, and many other hon. Members behind us, to give the landlords that remedy which would naturally flow through a breach of contract. We resisted that pressure; we declined to in any way depart from the principles which were pressed upon us by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Derby. That was not all. In Committee Section 85 was discussed, and the Bill left the House with the bargain carried out that the landlord would pay the tithe, and have as against the tenant the same remedy that the tithe owner would have had, and no more. What has happened since? A verbal alteration has been made, and that is made the ground for the suggestion that the House of Lords have altered the Bill, and for the re-opening of a question which was discussed and settled. I confess I should be surprised if those who remember what we went through on the occasion of former Debates think it right to depart from what was accepted unwillingly by hon. Members behind the Government and pressed upon the Government by hon. Gentlemen opposite. It is perfectly true that the particular remedy to distrain for rent only exists with regard to the particular farm which is occupied by the tenant; but what happens? The tenant could be made bankrupt; he could be sued, an ejectment could be obtained and the whole of the stock, crops, and furniture might be removed from one farm to the other. The hon. and gallant Member for the Holderness Division (Captain Bethell) has put a question to me. The landlord in respect of rent has larger remedies, has remedies which go right over the whole of the land occupied by the owner. He can make that owner bankrupt; he can turn him out of the farms by means of an ejectment, and therefore the position is this; that this is an attempt to cut down the particular remedy of the landlord who has paid the tithe. I trust the House will adhere to the position prior to the Bill leaving the House.

(5.44.) SIR W. HARCOURT: I quite agree with the Attorney General as to the general change made in the original provision. I confess that when I first saw the Amendments of the Lords, I was utterly unable to understand why they altered the Bill. I thought they had some object in making the alterations, and that they regarded this as something different from the arrangement to which the Attorney General has referred. It is ridiculous to say this is better drafting—it is worse drafting. The Attorney General has not attempted to explain why the alteration is made; but he has appealed to us on this side of the House, and to me specially, to adhere to Clause 85. I do not know whether Clause 85 was discussed; it was certainly not discussed when I was here, because I have learned a great deal more about the clause in this Debate than I ever heard before.

Mr. S. T. EVANS: It was never mentioned in the last Debate.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I thought when the Attorney General said it was discussed in Committee it must have been when I was absent. But the hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan was never away. Now that the Lords have brought the clause specially under our notice, I think we are entitled to see what the operation of the clause will be. The hon. Member for Dorsetshire has pointed out what an exceedingly invidious position a landlord will be in if he is empowered to exercise such power as this. I think there are few people who would be disposed to say that a landlord should distrain not only upon in the case of the farm which the tenant holds under him, but also in the case of some other farm. Few people would have the courage to make such an assertion unless it be the noble Lord the Member for Darwen, who, in the interest of truth, justice, religion, and piety, would do his duty and distrain upon the yeoman. Such an operation would not commend this Bill or the persons who took advantage of it to the agricultural tenants of the country. In the interest of the Bill the Government would do well not to press the powers under Clause 85. In respect to the argument of the Attorney General, I should like to say I have never heard of a landlord sueing the tenant for the non-payment of tithe. I have always understood that the landlord has been willing to leave the tithe owner to enforce the obligation in regard to tithe. I am fully persuaded that if this clause is ever acted upon a great deal of irritation, vexation, and discontent will be created; and in opposing the clause I do not consider I am departing from any understanding which has been come to.

*(5.52.) Sir M. HICKS BEACH: I cannot quite accept the theory that the right hon. Gentleman is so ignorant that he did not appreciate what has been done. Let me point out what the House will do if they agree to the omission of Section 85. Section 81 limits the power of distraint to land liable to the payment of any tithe-rent charge. The only lands thus liable to the particular tithe rent-charge are lands upon which the particular tithe rent-charge is apportioned, and, therefore, in order to prevent an occupier from escaping distraint altogether by removing his stock or produce from one field to another, the Legislature in 1836 gave the tithe owner further powers of distraint which are conferred upon him by Section 85. If Section 85 were omitted the result would be that landowners in many cases would be compelled under the Bill to pay the tithe rent-charge which the tenants have contracted to pay, and they would be absolutely prevented from recovering it from the tenant, because the stock or produce would be removed from one field to another.

(5.55.) The House divided:—Ayes 189; Noes 132.—(Div. List, No. 93.)

Amendment agreed to.

Page 2, line 12, the next Amendment, agreed to.

Page 2, line 23, after the word "powers," to insert the words—

"(3.) If such officer satisfies the Court that there is no sufficient distress on the said lands, the Court may authorise the person entitled to the sum ordered to be recovered to sue out a writ of habere facias possessionem, in accordance with Section 82 of the Tithe Act, 1836; and the said person on obtaining possession shall, in accordance with the Tithe Act, pay the surplus (if any), after payment of the tithe rent-charge and expenses, to the owner of the lands, and, while in possession, be under the obligation not to permit or commit any waste,"

the next Amendment, read a second time.

*(6.11.) Sir M. HICKS BEACH: The hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan has given notice of an Amendment to this proviso, but I think I can meet what he wants by the Amendment, a copy of which I have placed in his hands. What I propose is to leave out the words in the beginning of the proviso down to the word "court" in the second line, and insert—

"If the Court is satisfied that the officer would find no distress, or not sufficient distress on the said lands, the Court"—

may authorise, and so on. That will insure that the officer shall attempt to distrain, or prove to the satisfaction of the Court there is nothing to distrain upon.

Amendment proposed to the said Amendment, to leave out from the word

"If," to the words "the court," in line 2, and insert the words—

"The court is satisfied that the officer could find no distress, or no sufficient distress, on the said lands."—(*Sir M. Hicks Beach.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said Amendment."

(6.12.) MR. S. T. EVANS: The right hon. Gentleman has given me the opportunity of seeing this Amendment, but I cannot say I have had time to properly consider it. The original proposition was that the officer should satisfy the Court; but now the right hon. Gentleman proposes to turn the sentence topsy-turvy, and says "if the Court is satisfied." I do not wish to prejudice the discussion of the Amendment generally, and I say nothing about giving a hearing to the tenant, as to which my hon. Friend will have something to say. I observe that the words do not indicate how the Court is to be satisfied. I do not myself see the advantage of the words. If the clause is to come in let it come in as it originally stood. What is the reason for altering the words in the old Act, that "if there shall be no distress," and so on, the writ may issue? What is the difficulty that the wording is intended to meet?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: My suggestion was to meet the point the hon. Member desired to raise. I do not desire any alteration.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Will the right hon. Gentleman accept the words "if there shall be"?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I am willing to do so.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed, to amend the Lords Amendment by leaving out from the word "if" to the word "no," in line 1, and insert the words "there shall be."

*MR. C. W. GRAY: On a point of order, Sir, I wish to oppose the Lords' Amendment altogether; does that Question come later?

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member may oppose the Motion that the Lords' Amendment, as amended, be agreed to.

(6.16.) SIR W. HARCOURT: Of course, all these Amendments are subject to the general objection we feel to the whole proceeding. On the very words of the Amendment the real objection arises, the evil pervades the whole thing. If there be no sufficient distraint on the land it involves that you are still to have a remedy for the recovery of the tithe. Well, surely the whole principle you have gone on in the Bill is to diminish the claim for tithe in proportion to the yield of the land, and *à fortiori* if the land yields no tithe you should have no remedy. On what grounds do the Government justify the reduction of the tithe in the case where the rent is in a certain degree less than the tithe, or more than a certain proportion of the tithe? Yet here is a proviso introduced into the Bill for giving a remedy against land which yields nothing at all. It really is a contradiction in terms. Therefore, although I do not advise taking a Division on the Amendment, it is still open to us to object to the whole principle, for clearly it is an absolute contradiction of the principle on which the Bill stands, the reduction of the claim for tithe in proportion to the yield of the land. Where the land yields nothing at all there is no revenue for tithe.

*(6.18.) MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): This section is not to apply merely to land that yields no produce, it applies to cases of land where at the time of distress there is not sufficient on the land to answer the distress, and the two cases are entirely different. During a large part of the year the bulk of the land of a farm may have nothing on it capable of being distrained upon.

SIR W. HARCOURT: At what time of the year?

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: Take pasture land where during the winter months there may be nothing to distrain upon. Then, again, take orchards, where there may be for a considerable time no produce capable of distraint. I know a case in Kent to which this section was applied. An orchard had not produced any kind of fruit worth gathering for several years. Tithe had accrued, there was nothing on the land to distrain, and this section was put in force. It was manured, dug, pruned, and cultivated by the clergyman of the parish, and he afterwards took a crop of fruit, and partially paid himself. The tenant in that case afterwards issued a writ of *supersedeas*, and having paid the balance of what was due for the tithe and the expenses, resumed possession. There is no doubt that unless this power to take possession is retained as a final remedy there will be cases of perfectly good land paying rent, from which it will be almost impossible to obtain tithe if the landlord and tenant together resist it.

*(6.19.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Surely we can come to an agreement on this, which is merely a verbal Amendment, and then come to the main Question.

Amendment agreed to.

(6.20.) MR. J. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I wish to move the insertion of an Amendment after the word "lands," and my object is this: As has just been mentioned by the hon. Member for St. Pancras, occasionally there is land which at certain times of the year is bereft of all chattels on which distraint could be levied. It would be possible, if the words remain in the clause, for the tithe owner to drop upon these lands at that particular season when there would be no distraint available, and thereupon having proved to the Court that there had been an attempt to seize, but without avail, a writ of *habere facias possessionem* would be put in force. I am not taking a merely theoretical objection—it has proved a very practical difficulty. Some little time ago in Denbigh a hardship of the kind did arise. There was accommodation pasture land upon which a tithe owner gave notice of his intention to distrain. That notice was given when there was a large number of cattle on the land. The notice was given in August, the ten days expired, and the tenant expected distraint. But the tithe owner did not distrain. He waited until late in the season, when the pasture was exhausted, and two months afterwards, when the tenant in the ordinary course of farming operations withdrew, on the approach of winter weather, his cattle to the homestead—this, understand, was mountain land, accommodation land some miles from the homestead—then the tithe owner dropped upon the land, sent the bailiff, got him to swear there was nothing to distrain upon, and made application for a writ of *habere facias possessionem*. This application was resisted, and the tenant, through counsel, undertook that if the writ was not issued he would put sufficient distress upon the land to meet the tithe, and assured the Court that the cattle were taken off in the ordinary course of farming. Yet still it was held that there being no distress at the time the bailiff went there, and there being no such proviso as this I am about to propose, the Court was bound to issue, and did issue the writ. Now, in Wales there is a considerable amount of pasture land in the mountain districts which from the end of October to April or the beginning of May is free from any cattle; mountain land upon which no cattle, horses, or sheep can live during the winter. Without the words I propose, a tithe owner, for the simple purpose of annoyance, and to put a tenant to heavy costs, could wait until the winter, then send his bailiff up to the mountain, prove there was no distress, and apply for a writ. I propose, therefore, that it shall be open to the tenant to show that the want of distress was simply a temporary one in the ordinary course of farming, that in the ordinary season there would be sufficient distress, and that, therefore, the writ ought not to issue.

Amendment proposed, in line 2 of the said Amendment, after the word "lands," to insert the words—

"and there is no probability that there will, in the ordinary course of farming, be sufficient distress thereon."—(*Mr. Bryn Roberts.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(6.25.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The hon. Member proposes to throw a very difficult duty on the Court in requiring it to decide on a matter of probability. The Court can only decide on the matter of fact whether there was an absence of distress. Moreover, the hon. Member assumes most extraordinary conduct on the part of the tithe owner when he supposes he will act, as is suggested, for the sake of annoying the tithepayer. The object of the tithe owner is to get his tithe paid, and therefore he will not levy his distress at a time when he knows there is nothing to distrain upon. It is not reasonable to suppose the tithe

owner will act in such a way simply to annoy the tithepayer, for he will annoy himself a great deal more if he levies distress at such a time in order to obtain the alternative remedy of entry on the land, for he will then have to cultivate or stock it himself. I cannot think that it is necessary to insert such an Amendment as this.

(6.29.) The House divided :—Ayes 121 ; Noes 205.—(Div. List, No. 94.)

(6.41.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I beg to move to insert the words—

"After notice given to and hearing of the owner and occupier of the said lands."

I desire to point out that the sub-section as it stands will enable the Court on the mere *ex parte* statement of a bailiff to issue a writ of *habere facias possessionem.* That, I think, is undesirable, and accordingly I move to insert words providing that before the writ can be sued out notice shall be given to the owner and occupier of the lands, and an opportunity afforded for their being heard. The proposal of the sub-section will be a very expensive process. In the first place there will be the appearance before the County Court Judge, which will count for something, then there is the order of the Judge for the suing out of the writ, then there is the preparation of the affidavit in the country and the application in Chambers in London for the inquisition. That means two separate sets of solicitors, and means the employments of counsel here, the preparation of affidavits, and the hearing in Chambers of the whole of the facts which ought to have been heard in the County Court. Then after the High Court has issued the writ another writ is issued to the Sheriff—a writ of inquisition to inquire into the amount of arrears due in respect of the tithe rent-charge. Then there is the return made by the Sheriff to the Court again, and after that there is another process. According to the proposal as it stands it would involve three separate processes to try this one simple question—the *ex parte* statement to the County Court Judge, the application to the Court, and the trial before the Sheriff. The Sheriff has to pay the jury, and the hearing of a writ of inquisition before the Sheriff is not an inexpensive process. There are further fees to be paid, besides solicitors and witnesses costs. If these words of mine were introduced, the result would be that the bailiff, in making his application to the County Court Judge, would be cross-examined by the owners and occupiers as to the circumstances upon which he came to the conclusion that there was no distress on the farm. In the only case I know where this writ was issued, before the bailiff entered, the cattle had been driven to another farm. The cattle were only temporarily absent; but, simply because he did not for the moment discover anything distrainable on the property, the Sheriff returned that there was nothing on which distraint could be levied, and all these processes had to be gone through in order to seize the land for the purpose of discharging the tithe rent-charge, whereas if he had waited a short time he would have discovered the cattle. To meet cases of that character and prevent tithe owners from entering upon expensive and unnecessary processes, I propose the simple method of giving notice to the owner and occupier to appear before the Court. If the bailiff, on the first visit, finds there is not sufficient distress, the Court would call in the owner to give a sort of undertaking that when the officer visited the farm on the second occasion he should find sufficient distress. No occupier, or professional man representing him before the Court, would think of breaking his word after giving an undertaking of that description.

Amendment proposed,

In line 2 of the said Amendment, after the word "may," to insert the words "after notice given to, and hearing of, the owner and occupier of the said lands."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(6.47.) SIR R. WEBSTER: I have no objection to dealing with the substance of the Amendment, but I think the particular line the right hon. Gentleman has taken does not meet the case. It is not necessary to put in the owner, as we are only dealing with the question of there being sufficient distress on the premises. I would suggest that the words should run—

"After such service on the occupier, if necessary, as may be prescribed, and after hearing such occupier if he desires to be heard."

The words "if necessary" would be to meet the case of derelict farms, and it was in respect of those farms that this clause was inserted.

(6.48.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I will withdraw my Amendment in favour of that of the hon. and learned Gentleman.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Lords Amendment amended, by inserting in line 2, after the word "court," the words—

"After such service on the occupier, if any, as may be prescribed, and after hearing such occupier if he desires to be heard."

(6.49.) CAPTAIN BETHELL: The Amendment says the writ of *habere facias possessionem* shall be in accordance with Section 82 of the Tithe Act of 1836. But the latter part of the clause incorporates a certain part of Section 83 of the Act of 1836. The man in possession is bound to furnish accounts to the Court under which he acts under this section; and there are also forms by which the man in possession can be put out. Should not the man in possession be obliged to present accounts to the Court, as he is under the Act of 1836?

Amendment proposed, in line 4 of the said Amendment, after the words "eighty-two," to insert the words "and eighty-three."—(*Captain Bethell.*)

Question proposed, "That the words 'and eighty-three' be there inserted."

*(6.52.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: When there is no distress the receivership is practically determined, and the matter is handed over to the Superior Court. My hon. Friend (Mr. Lloyd-George) was mistaken in supposing that the process of writ of inquiry by the Sheriff will be at all necessary. I apprehend it will not be necessary. On the production of an order of the County Court Judges an officer of the Superior Court should issue the writ of *habere facias possessionem*, and possession would be taken. It would have been better, I think, if the Bill had provided that the County Court Judge should, on facts being proved before him to justify an application to the Superior Court, have had powers conferred upon him to make an order in the nature of a writ of possession. Then jurisdiction should have been given to the County Court Judge to require the tithe owner to render an account of his possession of the property, and to grant an order for determining the possession. The process would then have been more simple. I suppose now it is too late for the Government to adopt that suggestion, but if, at any future time, the Act is amended, this must be done, in order to cheapen and simpify procedure.

(6.55.) SIR R. WEBSTER: There is not the slightest intention of relieving a person who has taken possession of the land from obligations such as are contained in the existing law. The idea in referring to Section 82 of the Act of 1836, was to get a starting point. The County Court would be able to do that which was pointed out by the hon. Member opposite (Mr. Bolton). It would be a matter of form.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

(6.56.) MR. H. R. FARQUHARSON: I have an Amendment on the Paper, but I do not think it will be necessary for me to move it, as I believe the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade proposes an alteration which will remove my objection. It does not altogether satisfy me, but it is sufficiently satisfactory to render it unnecessary for me to go on with my Amendment.

Amendment proposed,

"At the end of the said Amendment, to add the words 'and either to cultivate the lands in a good and husbandlike manner according to the custom of the country, or, if he lets the land, to bind the tenant so to cultivate them.'"—(*Sir M. Hicks Beach.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

(6.58.) MR. BEADEL (Essex, Chelmsford): I beg to suggest that, instead of the words proposed by the right hon. Gentleman being added after the word "waste," they should be inserted after the word "obligation" in the preceding line, the effect being that the person obtaining possession shall be under an obligation either to cultivate the land in a good and husbandlike way according to the custom of the country, or, if he should let the land, to bind the tenant so to cultivate it.

(7.0.) MR. S. T. EVANS: This illustrates the difficulty we have in discussing Amendments of so technical and complicated a nature, especially when they have not been put upon the Paper. As the case stands, it would seem that the man who takes possession cannot turn out the man who has possession at the time of entry, but could put another tenant in his place. I would advise my hon. Friend to ask the Government to postpone the further consideration of this clause, so that we may have further time to consider it. It certainly raises very important questions of a complicated and technical nature, which we not only want to consider ourselves, but upon which we may require to take the advice of experts.

(7.3.) MR. T. H. BOLTON: I would certainly join in the request that the Government should postpone this clause, because I feel serious doubts as to whether the County Court Judge has the power to make such an order as is suggested. Is it proposed that the County Court should have power to make an order in the nature of a writ of possession, power to take accounts and have control of the property, power to put the tithe owner in possession, and to exercise a certain control while he is in possession, and further power to make another order in the nature of a writ of *supersedeas* to give re-possession of the land to the landowner? This is very serious and important, as it empowers the putting in of the tithe owner not only to hold and use the land, but to let it; he may, if he sees fit, turn out the tenant in possession and put in a new tenant, granting a tenancy from year to year. In the last case this tenant could not be got out under two years' notice. I am not opposing this power; but I hope we shall have further opportunity of considering the clause, and, in saying this, I would remind the Government I have supported the Bill consistently, and that I am not, therefore, likely to make any suggestion that is not in the best spirit.

(7.10.) SIR W. HARCOURT: I can confirm the statement of my hon. Friend behind me, that he has given valuable support to the Government on this Bill, and I would venture to point out that we are now in exactly the position we were in when this very clause was in Committee. When it came to be discussed in Committee it was found that it was surrounded by so many difficulties, and that there were so many points which required to be gravely considered, that after debating it for several hours the Government, in order to allow the clause to be placed on a respectable footing, said they would deal with it on the Report. When we came to the Report stage the clause was still found to be surrounded by so many difficulties that the Government then thought the best thing they could do was to abandon it. But now, without further consideration, the clause is sent down from the House of Lords and we are asked to pass it in a form the Government did not think it right to put it in when it was in this House before. I say that this is not fair; and I feel that the appeal which is now made to the Government is a just one, namely, that if the clause is to be persisted in we should have further time to consider it. Either let the Government do as they did in Committee and on the Report of the Bill in this House, and abandon the clause, or, if they think it of such importance that they must press it, let them give us more time to consider it. One very serious question has just been raised. I was not in the House when the Attorney General spoke, but I should be very much surprised to hear him pledge himself to the opinion that the County Court can issue a writ of *fieri facias possessionem*. In my opinion that does not lie in the jurisdiction of the County Court. If you refer to Section 82 of the Tithe Act it will be seen that it never contemplated the issue of a writ by the County Court. It assumes that that can only be done by a Superior Court, and the reference made in this Bill, in my opinion, only authorises an application to a Superior Court to issue such a writ. I should be much astonished if the Attorney General said the clause gives any authority to the County Court which it does not now possess. Under Section 82 there was power to have an inquisition before a jury, but that is done away with, and therefore you are not leaving the law as it stood before, but are substituting for the inquisition as to the amount of rent recoverable what I regard as a very dangerous thing, because it certainly is a dangerous thing to deal with that Section 82 simply by inference. Had you re-enacted Section 82 or said it shall disappear, I could have understood it; but it seems to me that by the clause as it stands the law will be most materially altered—because you say, not by express words but by implication, if there is not sufficient distress on the land the Court may authorise the person entitled to recover to sue out a writ. That is not the way in which we ought to deal with difficult and delicate questions of jurisdiction. I hope Lord Selborne is not responsible for such slip-shod drafting as that of this clause. By Section 82 the rent-charge is to be in arrear if unpaid for the space of 40 days, and if there be no sufficient distress it is to be lawful for the Judges at the Courts of Westminster to order a writ to issue. Is that abolished? If so, show me the section and the words which abolish it. You cannot abolish it by implication. The Court is to require the bailiff to summon a jury to assess the arrears of the tithe rent-charge. Have you abolished that, or is it to go on? We never conceived such an absurdity as that contemplated by the hon. Member for Oldham—that all these preliminaries will have to be gone through before the County Court made the order. The people who drew this Amendment in the Lords have not seen that they were bound to abolish the jurisdiction already existing before they created a substituted jurisdiction. What is to prevent a man, before taking proceedings before the County Court, going to the Superior Court under Clause 82? What I want to know is whether all these antecedent processes which are referred to are to be abolished or to remain. If they are to remain, it is impossible to have anything more oppressive; if they are to be abolished, where are the words abolishing them? This Amendment must have been drawn in ignorance of the law, and I cannot attribute it to the authorship which the President of the Board of Trade has described. If the owner of the tithe rent charge can sue out a writ of *habere facias possessionem* what becomes of the writ of the High Court? You cannot abolish or create a jurisdiction without the use of careful, accurate, and statutory terms. These are important questions which the House ought to consider before abolishing jurisdictions of this kind, and creating an apparently new jurisdiction. Therefore, I urge the Government to give us time to consider how the law is to be altered. It is quite plain that you are not leaving the law as it is. The law is totally different to what is contemplated by this Amendment. If it is intended to insist on this proposal, I should support the Motion for Adjournment.

(7.22.) SIR R. WEBSTER: I can only speak with the indulgence of the House, and I should like to say at once that I made a mistake when I said that the County Court issued the process. There is no necessity for postponement, as the preliminary steps to which reference has been made would no longer be necessary.

SIR W. HARCOURT: The question is whether any writ can be issued without an inquisition upon the order of the County Court. There are no such words in Section 82, which imply that a writ can be issued without an inquisition. It is a condition precedent.

SIR R. WEBSTER: That is a matter of opinion. The Statute says that the County Court may issue the writ, and, with due deference to the judgment of the right hon. Gentleman, I have no doubt the proceedings may be taken up under Section 82, at the stage of the issue of the writ. At any rate, that is the procedure we contemplate. I would remind the right hon. Gentleman what is the necessity for this procedure. It has become necessary to deal with derelict farms, on which no distress could be levied. We have already provided for the protection of the occupier, if he desires to prevent the writ being issued. The writ being issued, it is desirable that further proceedings should be under the Act of 1836; not Section 82, as the right hon. Gentleman observed.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Yes; I beg pardon; the Act of 1836. Practically speaking, it is only after the issue of the writ that the machinery of the Act of 1836 is applied. I think no such difficulties as are anticipated will arise, and there is no necessity for postponement, because we do not propose to abolish the existing law.

(7.25.) SIR H. DAVEY (Stockton): If anything showed the necessity of further consideration of this question, it is the speech which the Attorney General has just made. With all his experience and learning, he stated an opinion which he now says was a mistake, and has stated a second opinion which he says is right. The effect of this clause is that a person has to go to the High Court, and whether that is a convenient procedure, and whether a man is to be knocked from one Court to another, I leave to the House to judge. But we have been under the impression that up to the present time the intention was to enable the County Court to issue the writ. The High Court has no jurisdiction except under Section 82 of the Act of 1836, and it cannot be denied, I think, that it can only issue the writ in accordance with the conditions prescribed by that section. I do not for one moment set up any opinion which I might be able to form in opposition to the opinion of my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General, but I think it must be obvious to the House that, whether his opinion is right or wrong — and I confess with the utmost humility it does not commend itself to my mind — we are legislating in the dark. We are asked to pass one of those sections which are too frequent in Acts of Parliament, and of which the framers do not know the meaning. Who pays to construe them? The suitors have to pay for construing Acts of Parliament. If the Attorney General had not given so clear an opinion, I should have said that it was almost impossible to argue that the fact of the County Court authorising a person to go to the High Court of Justice under Section 82 could mean anything else than that the preliminary proceedings in that section, by which the High Court acquires its jurisdiction, are to be complied with. And if that is so, I fail to see how the writ will be issued in accordance with Section 82. I may be, probably am, wrong, but if there is a particle of doubt, I would suggest to those who have charge of the Bill, that they should put the clause in such a form that plain people who read it may understand it.

*(7.29.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I beg to join in the request to the Government that this matter be postponed. I think if we had time to consider the matter, by to-morrow we could make the clause perfectly clear.

*(7.30.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The Government fully appreciate the difficulty of the subject, and are far from desiring the House to come to a decision upon it without full consideration. The question before the House is the insertion of the words which I have moved. I would suggest, if the course is in order, that those words shall be inserted, and that then the Debate on the question whether the House shall agree with the clause shall be adjourned until after the consideration of the other Amendments.

*MR. SPEAKER: I understand that the proposal is to adjourn the consideration of this clause until after the other Amendments are disposed of. Such a course is novel; but if it meet with the general consent of the House I will not, under the circumstances, object to it, provided the Motion is made by the Minister in charge and that it meets with the general assent of the House.

(7.32.) SIR W. HARCOURT: It is evident that this clause has been brought forward without due consideration. There are only two courses open to us; either to postpone the Bill or to drop this clause altogether.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: Oh, oh!

SIR W. HARCOURT: The noble Lord, who seems to consider himself in charge of the Bill, will, I suppose, tell the Government what they are to do. After the argument of the hon. Member for Stockton—than whom, despite his modesty, we could have no higher authority—we know that this question is not even arguable. Under the Act of 1836 the High Court could alone issue the writ, and although as the Attorney General admitted, the Government intended that the writ should be issued by the County Court, we know now it cannot be done.

SIR R. WEBSTER: I made a mistake to-night in saying that the Government intended that the writ should be issued by the County Court.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Then the Government did not communicate their intentions to the hon. and learned Gentleman. No doubt they intended it should be so.

SIR R. WEBSTER: I have taken the full blame on myself. It is not a question of the Government communicating their intentions to me. I was responsible for the original suggestion. I have frankly said that I made a mistake in answering a question across the floor of this House, and of that the right hon. Gentleman may remind me as often as he chooses, but he must not misinterpret my position.

Sir W. HARCOURT: I did not intend to do so. It was originally intended that jurisdiction in these matters should be transferred to the County Court, but it is now quite clear that that has not been done, and that it remains with the High Court. I think we ought to prolong this Debate, unless the Government choose to drop the clause out of the Bill.

*(7.37.) Mr. C. W. GRAY: The proposal embodied in the Amendment of the President of the Board of Trade does not altogether meet the views of my friends and myself. The whole subject is so complicated that the more the House attempts to deal with it the more difficult it appears. At the earliest moment I shall move the rejection of the clause altogether, so that we may return to the position occupied when the House first went into Committee. I do not wish to be unfair either to the tithe owner or the tithepayer.

*(7.40.) Sir J. PEASE (Durham, Barnard Castle): It seems, from the proposition made in such a fair spirit by the President of the Board of Trade, that this clause must be amended, and I therefore think it would be much better for the Government to take up some other business for the remainder of the evening, and endeavour, before again bringing this matter on, to amend the clause in a practical way. At present, so far as we have been able to gather from the Debate, the lawyers on both sides of the House are unable to understand it, and, therefore, I am sure that laymen cannot be expected to do so. When the clause is brought forward in a form in which it is possible to understand it, I think we shall be able to discuss the matter. I beg to move that the Debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—*(Sir Joseph Pease.)*

Mr. S. T. EVANS: I beg to second that.

*(7.42.) Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE: It is quite clear that as this Amendment now stands we cannot put it into a satisfactory shape. I think the best course would be to disagree with the clause, and then leave it to their Lordships to endeavour to put it in another and more satisfactory form. If we adopt that plan, and the clause is sent down to us in an acceptable shape, it will be open to us to discuss the matter. That, I hold, is the only course it is practicable to adopt.

Sir R. Webster

(7.43.) Sir W. HARCOURT: I agree with the hon. Member for Stockport that it is desirable we should agree with the Lords' Amendment.

*(7.43.) Sir M. HICKS BEACH: I had hoped my suggestion would have met with general acceptance, as it would not have placed any hon. Member in a worse position; but as there seems to be a determination on both sides not to accept the clause in its present form, time may be saved by disagreeing with it forthwith. This course will be adopted by the Government, but only on the complete understanding that we are free as to the course we may adopt in regard to the subject both here and in the other House.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment to the said Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Question, "That this House doth disagree with the Lords in the said Amendment, as amended," put, and agreeed to.

Page 2, line 28, after "1836," to insert the words—

"And where any of such lands are held at one rent together with other lands in another parish, the court shall apportion the rent between the said lands and the lands in the other parish in proportion to their rateable value,"

the next Amendment, read a second time, amended, and agreed to.

Several Amendments agreed to.

Page 3, line 4, after the word "prescribed," to insert the words—

"And hearing of such occupier if he appears and desires to be heard. Any owner of the lands who fails to serve such notice as aforesaid on the owner of the tithe rent-charge, shall not be entitled to recover from the occupier any sum which he has paid on account of tithe rent-charge as aforesaid, unless and until he has, after notice to the occupier of his application for the same, obtained from the county court a certificate that the failure to give such notice was not intentional, and that the occupier has not been prejudiced thereby,"

the next Amendment, read a second time.

Amendment proposed, in line 2 of the said Amendment, to leave out the words "and desires to be heard."—(*Mr. S. T. Evans.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed, in line 6 of the said Amendment, to leave out from the word "aforesaid," to the end of the said Amendment.—(*Mr. S. T. Evans.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said Amendment."

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment amended, in line 9, by inserting, after the word "That," the words "there was good and sufficient cause for," and leaving out the words "was not intentional."

Question, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment, as amended," put, and agreed to.

Amendments, as far as Clause B, agreed to.

Clause B (Lands occupied rent free), the next Amendment, read a second time.

(7.55.) MR. S. T. EVANS: I think this is the proper place to move the Amendment to leave out from "order," to the end of the clause, in order to insert the following words:—

> "Sum ordered to be recovered or the portion thereof remaining unpaid shall, until payment thereof, be a charge upon the interest in the lands of the owner of such lands, but such charge shall not be enforceable by sale until a year has elapsed after the creation thereof."

This is one of the most important Amendments which the other House has made. It is intended to meet cases where the rent of the land is insufficient—where the receiver has nothing to receive, and where, consequently, the tithe owner cannot get the tithe. The question was raised when the Bill was in Committee in this House and the Government failed to grapple with it. This proposal, I take it, has been inserted with the concurrence of the Government, and we have heard from the right hon. Gentleman that the Government mean to adhere to it. I hope that the House will understand the meaning of it. In any case where the rent is insufficient to satisfy the tithe rent-charge, the Government have actually come to the conclusion that the occupier shall, in consequence of the default of the landlord, be subject to distress and have to pay, not only the tithe, but also the costs. Certainly one noble Lord proposed to give the occupier interest at the rate of 4 per cent.; but if the rent is not sufficient to pay the tithe what chance will the occupier have of getting from an impecunious landlord, not only what he has paid, but also the interest? Let us take a concrete case: A man takes a farm for fourteen years, and in consideration of erecting certain buildings he is to have it for the first seven years at a peppercorn rent. During that time he may be saddled with the payment of tithe and not have a chance of getting anything back till the eighth year. I say it would be most unfair to make the tithe in such a case as that provided for in the clause rest on the occupier. It ought to be a charge on the land. Is this House going to allow the money which ought to be expended in the improvement and cultivation of the land to be taken out of the pockets of the occupier for the benefit of the landlord, a miserable 4 per cent. on the money being allowed the occupier? There was a difficulty, but the Government have dealt with it in the worst possible manner, in the most oppressive manner against the occupier, they could devise. What is to be done if this Amendment is neglected, and I hope the House will neglect it. It is not for us to propose a remedy. The Government have thought fit to stir up the question of tithe, and if they find difficulties facing them it is for themselves to find a means of getting out of them. But if the Government say they cannot suggest anything which would be more consonant with justice than the Amendment on the Paper, I think I can suggest a better remedy. I propose there shall be a charge on the land. That is not a hardship upon the landlord. The obligation to pay rests upon the landlord, and, therefore, you ought not to do anything which is oppressive to the occupier. The proposal I made originally was that there should be a sale of the land, but I made the proposal without sufficient consideration, and I agree its operation would not be fair to the landlord. But if the landlord does not pay, if he likes to make an arrangement with his tenant and gets the upper hand in any bargain with the tenant, it is upon him that the Government ought to saddle a new obligation under an Amendment of this kind. I beg to propose my Amendment.

Amendment proposed, in line 7 of the said Amendment, to leave out from the word "the," to the end of the said Amendment, and insert the words—

"Sum ordered to be recovered or the portion thereof remaining unpaid shall, until payment thereof, be a charge upon the interest in the lands of the owner of such lands, but such charge shall not be enforceable by sale until a year has elapsed after the creation thereof."—(*Mr. S. T. Evans.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the said Amendment."

(8.5.) SIR R. WEBSTER: The hon. Gentleman and his friends recognise there is a difficulty to be dealt with. They proposed some time ago to find a remedy in the sale of the land, but they have abandoned that proposal. What is the difficulty which has to be met? It is true, as the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade has pointed out, that the discussion initiated on the previous stage of the Bill has opened people's eyes to a way in which the payment of tithe could be evaded. Let us take a simple case: Suppose a landlord and tenant enter into an agreement whereby the tenant says "instead of paying you £50 a year rent for 10 years I will pay you £400 down." The occupier knows perfectly well that tithe is due and would become due from year to year; he knows the land is worth £50 a year, but he elects to pay a proportionately smaller sum down in order that neither party may be required to pay tithe. I submit there is no hardship in such a case in putting the occupier in the position of owner. I appeal to the House to consider what is the best and fairest way of dealing with such an attempt to evade the payment of tithe, You cannot sell the reversioner's interest; that is an impracticable remedy. When you are dealing with land which is fairly worth from year to year more than the tithe, you ought to provide that the tithe should be received *in anno in anno.* Take a case where a tenant agrees not to pay rent for say seven years, but to spend what he otherwise would pay as rent upon farm buildings. I submit that in such a case the tithe owner ought not to be deprived of his tithe.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Suppose, as very often happens, the occupier says, "I must have farm buildings" and the landlord says, "I am a poor man, I cannot afford to erect buildings, but if you will erect them I will let you off the rent for seven years."

SIR R. WEBSTER: That is simply a re-statement of my proposition. Surely the hon. Member does not mean to suggest he would countenance a bargain whereby a poor unfortunate clergyman would be deprived of £10 which might be due to him as tithe. The clause contemplates cases in which it is the *bonâ fide* and willing purpose of the occupier to do something other than pay rent. If it is the willing purpose of the occupier to pay his rent otherwise than through the proper channel, we ought to protect the clergyman in his claim on the land. I do hope that when hon. Members argue this question, they will not change the premisses upon which my argument has proceeded. Those premisses are that if there is an annual value, and the landlord is willing that that annual value shall be replaced by bricks and mortar, the tithe owner shall not be deprived of his tithe. Justice and equity dictate that the tithe owner ought to be protected in case such a bargain is made, and the proper remedy is that suggested by this clause. (8.10.)

*(8.46.) MR. STUART RENDEL: It cannot but be matter of regret to some of us that a question we regard as of much greater importance than other questions dealt with earlier in the evening should have come on for discussion in a very thin House. We have had the advantage of a full explanation of the Government view from the Attorney General, and he has courteously challenged us to meet him in argument, only stipulating that we should not depart from the case he has put before us.

(8.47.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present, *MR. STUART RENDEL: The Attorney General has stipulated that we should keep strictly to the case he has submitted, and I will endeavour to do so. This lacuna in the Government measure has been discovered by my hon. Friend (Mr. S. T. Evans), whose grasp of the whole subject has been admitted by the House, and we have to consider the Government proposal to fill it under the disadvantage of having been able to give only scant attention to the proposal. Now, why is it that the Attorney General assumes that exceptional security is required in the circumstances of land, the rent of which has been paid by premium, and is not payable year by year; and why, if there is to be this extra security for the tithe owner, is the occupier to be at the cost of it? I do not know whether the Attorney General would like an innocent layman to suppose that any legal liability for tithe rests upon the occupier, that the occupier under any circumstances is to be a guarantor of the tithe on behalf of the owner? The occupier surely is no more bound to take cognizance, whether the tithe is paid or not by the landowner, than he is bound to take cognisance whether the landowner has paid his Land Tax or any other of his personal liabilities? I do not think that it is sufficient argument to use now to say that the occupier should bear the brunt of this. That there are tithe owners in circumstances of great distress, that there are, as the hon. and learned Gentleman says, parsons in circumstances that excite our sympathy, may be true—and we cannot but consider that these circumstances reflect the greatest discredit upon the landed class in Wales on whose behalf the system exists; but why the occupier should be held responsible in this case I cannot understand, unless it comes from old traditional usage which made the occupier liable for the tithe. No doubt, in the operation of the Act of 1836, the occupier has been largely held liable where he ought not to have been, and the single merit of the present measure is that the occupier is relieved from this liability. It seems to me that it is a contradiction of the general spirit of the measure to attempt to treat the tenant as an additional security for tithe. To take the kind of example cited by the Attorney General—an occupier who agrees to pay for a 10 years' lease of a farm worth £50 a sum of £400 down. It is the contention of the Attorney General that the occupier in making his bargain ought to consider the liability of the land to tithe. But why? Why is a tenant to be so alive to this particular liability of the landlord any more than to any other? But granting that the man is quick enough to know all the circumstances, why is he, in consequence of his having paid £400 for the farm, to be placed under a special liability that would not naturally exist? Surely, if any one is to be placed under exceptional liability, it is not the man who has paid the £400, but the man who has got it—the man who has taken the immediate benefit, and not the person who has acted in all innocence and good faith, and with no intention of entering upon this new liability. It is a similar case to that brought forward by my hon. Friend (Mr. S. T. Evans)—a more direct case, where a tenant or occupier agrees to provide buildings or improvements necessary for occupation of the farm, the landlord not being in a position to find these and the tenant undertaking these receives a lease on beneficial terms. When the tenant has then and there, by the terms of his bargain, parted with his rent in advance, now, is it reasonable to say, that he is to bear the burden of this new arrangement, and not the man who has received the full immediate benefit? I suggest that the saddle is being put upon the wrong horse. I can only conjecture that this is from old, unfortunate habit, too long followed. It is not for us to suggest the remedy; this is a Government measure, for which we are not in any degree responsible. I confess it is beyond my power to suggest one, but, none the less, we are entitled, and indeed bound, in the interest of the occupier, to indicate to the best of our power the injustice that will arise by this means of meeting a difficulty—a difficulty which will be sure to arise more frequently in the future. It is opposed to the general spirit of the measure, which is to transfer the burden of tithe from the occupier to the owner.

*(8.59.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: It is certainly a singular thing that this blot in the Bill was not discovered in the passage of the Bill through the House before it went to another place.

The discovery is due to the acuteness of my hon. Friend and his special knowledge of this subject. The effect of the clause, as it stands, has been fairly stated by my hon. Friend. It is to make the occupier liable for the default of the owner. Surely the proper course would be to give a statutory remedy, not against the occupier, but against the owner—against the man who actually made default. The whole thing is full of difficulties, and I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill, that he should pursue the same course with regard to this Amendment as he followed with regard to the Amendment recently disposed of. The clause, as it now stands, is calculated to work serious injustice.

(9.1.) MR. H. R. FARQUHARSON: If there is anyone who will be tired of these Debates, I should think it will be the poor clergyman, who is trotted out on every possible occasion. The Attorney General has once again appealed to our sympathy on his behalf. It seems to me that such appeals betoken a very weak case, because the poor clergymen for whom the Attorney General pleads belong to the richest Church in the world, and it is ridiculous to suppose that the members of that Church would allow a clergyman to starve for the sake of £10 a year. The Government have, in effect, said: "The clergy are very poor fellows; help them out of the landlords' pockets." I object to that. The clergy are practically being helped, to the disadvantage of the landlords, and for the very reason that landlords are no longer to be allowed to let their farms to the best advantage. I have no doubt there are thousands of instances in the country where landlords have let their farms for 7, 10, and 14 years, on the understanding that for the first few years the rent shall be low, and higher in future years. If this Amendment from the Lords becomes law, it will be no longer possible for a needy landlord to so let his farms. Indeed, he will have taken away from him the only possible means of letting his farms at all. Again, some landlords let farms at a low rent in consideration of the tenant putting up buildings. It is said this should not be allowed; but it seems to me that if the land is of so little value, that the reduced rent consequent on buildings being put up by the tenant would put it below the annual value arrived at by valuers, it would be of advantage to the tithe owner that the buildings should be put up, because, although he would be a sufferer for a few years, he would be a gainer in the long run. The two cases I have given are far more common and likely to occur than the exceptional case which the Attorney General gave us of a landlord accepting £400 or £500 down in order to escape the payment of tithe. I was shocked when I read the suggestion made in another place that landlords were to be found who, for the sake of swindling the tithe owners, would agree with their tenants to take less rent. What would the Representatives of the tithe owners in this House say if we came here and attributed bad and unfair motives to them? I hope the Government will see their way to consent to the entire rejection of the Amendment. It contains a very unfair innuendo against the landlords, and, in addition, it will simply bring about what the Government have all along tried to avoid—that is to say, riots and troubles arising from distraining on the occupier. If the promoters of the Bill wish to secure the ostensible object with which the measure was brought forward, they will consent to the withdrawal of the Amendment.

(9.7.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: The weakness of the defence of the Government on this clause, is that it assumes that the clause will only be applied to cases in which collusion exists between the landlords and tenants. That is not the case. It will affect persons who have entered into a perfectly *bonâ fide* agreement. There is nothing easier than to give the County Court Judge some discretion to discriminate between the two cases. I believe the only object of the Government is to reach cases of collusion, and that object would be amply met by conferring such a discretion on the County Court Judge. It strikes me that the Government have not in the slightest degree aimed at refuting the arguments adduced on both sides of the House against the Lords Amendment. Take a case in which an owner lets his land to the occupier at a premium. Supposing land lies fallow for some years, it requires the expenditure of a considerable amount of capital to restore it to something like good condition. How will this section operate in such a case?

The landowner may be impoverished by the number of years his land has been out of cultivation, and may be unable to spend all the money that is needed to restore the land to proper condition. An agriculturist may say—

> "If you will let me this land for, say, ten years, I will spend so much money, and at the end of the ten years I will pay so much rent."

In a case of that kind the occupier will be punished for entering into a perfectly fair transaction, and one that is in the interest of the occupier and of the public. The Government seem to have ignored the interest of the public. It is to their interest that the land should have all this capital spent upon it; but the Government, by this section, would be penalising the action of capitalists who desire to restore the land to a state of cultivation. It would be inflicting a punishment on persons who are desirous of benefitting themselves, and the owners and the public, by cultivating these lands. Again, the clause will be a hardship on the occupier. It will refer to contracts prior to the passing of this Act. No power of this character was incorporated in the Act of 1836, therefore nothing of this sort could have been in contemplation when the agreements referred to were entered into, and there cannot have been collusion. But this Amendment would be of so sweeping a character that it would affect agreements entered into prior to the passing of the Act. It would inflict hardships on the *bonâ fide* occupiers. I observe that these words are in the clause, "provided that every such occupier shall be entitled in addition to any other remedy." I suppose that means the occupier may, if he is compelled to pay the tithe under the clause, draw upon the owner. But the remedy given to the occupier is perfectly useless in the case of impecunious persons who let their land on the condition that the tenant spends money upon it. In such a case the occupier who has, perhaps, been finding labour and improving the farm may find himself penalised to the extent of £50 a year. I would suggest that the clause should be confined to cases where the County Court Judge considers that there has been collusion. I am sure hon. Members on both sides of the House must be not only agreed but eager to find a remedy so that the tithe owner may not be defrauded. I think the County Court Judge should be allowed discretion in the matter, and that the Government should compare the operation of the clause to agreements entered into after the passing of the Act, because there could not have been agreements prior to it, such a law as this never having been contemplated.

(9.16.) MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I deny that there is any hardship to the occupier involved in the Lords' Amendment. What is proposed is in operation now in the case of the Landlords' Income Tax. The tenant is the man upon whom the officers of Her Majesty's Revenue come down and insist upon paying the Landlords' Income Tax. The tenant is the only man who can be forced to pay in the first instance, and the remedy which the tenant has is precisely the remedy which is given to the occupier in this Bill. A tenant has a right to deduct the Landlord's Income Tax from the rent he pays, and if the landlord declines to acknowledge the debt he is liable to a fine of £100. A similar state of things is proposed in the case of tithe. Where is the hardship to the occupier? He will have his remedy against the landlord. The section is intended to provide against collusion. There are no doubt landlords who will endeavour to evade the payment of the tithe rent-charge, and the method suggested seems to me an excellent one to frustrate any such unlawful endeavour.

(9.20.) SIR W. HARCOURT: We are all familiar with the fact that the hon. Member who has just sat down is the champion of the tithe owner. We have heard the claims of the tithe owner put pretty high, and the privileges of the parson elevated sufficiently in former discussions, but when the hon. Member puts tithe owners on a par with Her Majesty's Exchequer, to which are given remedies unknown in any other case, I think he is a little too strong. It if admitted that the man who is to pay is not the right man; but because it is difficult to get at the right man, it is intended to make the wrong man pay, and let him get his remedy from the right man if he can. Everyone admits that the owner should pay, and having made that a principle of your Bill you then go at the occupier and say he shall pay this and recover it from the owner if and how he can. As my hon. Friend below the Gangway (Mr. Lloyd-George) pointed out, he may be a perfectly impecunious man; therefore, you may be making a man who ought not to do so pay the money without any remedy at all against the man who, it is admitted, ought to pay. I hold that in the majority of these cases the landowners will be impecunious persons, and it is the habit of impecunious people to try and get money down for their present necessities. The landlord in these cases will be a man who will go to the tenant and ask for £500 down in order that he may go to, say, Monte Carlo. He gets his £500, and when that is spent what remedy will the tenant have against him? Can anything be more grossly and monstrously absurd? Do right hon. Gentlemen opposite believe that when an Act of this kind comes to be applied against the tenant farmers of England and the people of Wales they will not cry shame upon the Government? As the hon. Member below the Gangway has pointed out, it is not only to cases of collusion that this Bill is to be applied, but to all contracts entered into before the passing of the Bill. What sense or justice is there in that? A more gross and monstrous piece of injustice than is proposed in this clause it is impossible to conceive. I do not know whether this is one of the clauses for which the Government is responsible, or whether they will say, as they have said in other cases, "Please, Sir, it was the other boy, Lord Selborne." That is the line the Government are prepared to take in these Amendments, and they say that Lord Selborne is such a good boy that whatever he proposes must be right. To take an instance from criminal law: Suppose that the police, being very anxious to punish "Jack the Ripper," took hold of the first man they could find, who was the wrong man, and put the penalty upon him, but made a proviso that he should recover against the right man, could anything be more monstrous? Yet that is exactly the proposal now made. Because you are not clever enough to get at the right man you go at the wrong man. This Bill will apply to all the tenures in the country, some of which were more common in past times than they are now. Ecclesiastical property was formerly held on beneficial leases, yet that is precisely the class of lease which it will be

unjust to bring under this clause. The clergy wish to have it both ways—to introduce, in fact, a new kind of "benefit of clergy." Because people are clergy it does not release them from their ordinary obligations to their fellow-creatures. Such a proposition as that contained in the clause before the House could not be made except on behalf of some privileged class of the community. If there is a difficulty, let hon. Gentlemen opposite devise some means to obviate it, and of getting at the right man. It is not for me to suggest the means. Hon. Gentlemen opposite remind me of a picture in *Punch*, in which were represented a number of rustics, one of whom said, "Here's a stranger; let's heave half a brick at him." Hon. Gentlemen opposite seem to say, "Here's an occupier! Let's heave half a brick at him," and let him recover against the owner if he can. A more discreditable proposal never emanated from so august a place as that from which this comes. I will do the Government the credit of saying they have never had the face to make such a proposal to the House of Commons. A proposal so iniquitously unjust and so entirely in favour of landowners could never have come from any place except the House of Lords. We are accustomed to strange proposals from the House of Lords, and this is certainly as strange a proposal as ever came from there. I hope we shall offer the most determined opposition to it, and discuss it fully so that the people affected will understand it, and know by whom it is being done and the quarter whence it proceeds. Here is a Bill which proposes to lay the liability for tithe upon the owner, and now it is amended by the House of Lords so as to lay the burden upon the occupier, and leave him to recover as best he can. If he succeeds in recovering, he is to have 4 per cent. for his money. I hope the House will strongly resist this iniquitous demand upon the tenant-farmers of England—to advance money which they do not owe, leaving them to take their chance of getting it back again from the people who ought to pay.

(9.31.) MAJOR RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I think the hypothetical case put by the Attorney General is hardly sufficient to justify the introduction of this clause. I always understood that the great redeeming points of the Bill were reduction of tithe, in accordance with the altered value of agriculture, and payment by the landlord instead of the occupier. It seems to me that by this clause the last and greatest advantage of all is taken away from us.

*(9.33.) MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): I have listened, as far as I can, to the cases which have been put forward, and I find they are three in number. One refers to derelict estates, which cannot come under the clause at all. They will be put out by the 5th clause, which says that if the tithe exceeds two-thirds of the annual value then it shall be reduced in proportion. Secondly, as to cases of collusion between landlord and tenant to avoid the tithe rent-charge, this clause would only govern contracts made before the passing of the Act, and could not therefore include cases of collusion. Again, if there are cases of collusion, why in the world should you fall upon the occupier rather than upon the owner? One will probably have received something in the nature of rent, and upon him the burden ought to lie. The other case was that put by the hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan, of a tenant having taken a farm for a considerable period of time on the understanding that he was to lay out a considerable amount upon it. To make the occupier pay in such a case would be contrary to the very purpose and object of the Bill. The original Act of 1836 enabled the landlord to pay through the occupier. The remedy proposed by this Bill is to throw the payment on the landlord; yet, in a case where the occupier has been laying out money upon the estate, you actually say that he shall pay the tithe rent-charge, and not the landlord, and shall have his chance of recovering from the landlord. I have not heard a single case in which it would be be reasonable to get this money from the occupier. I think the Government must in all fairness see that, in accordance with the very object of their own Bill, they ought to endeavour to discover some means by which to put it upon the owner directly; and if they can devise no better means, let them accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan.

(9.38.) MR. C. W. GRAY: No one was more surprised than myself when I saw this clause introduced. I remember an Instruction of some three or four years ago to the Committee that tithe rent-charge should be recoverable from the landlords only. That principle was entirely accepted by Her Majesty's Government; but now we find that we are to have a re-introduction, under certain circumstances, of the process of recovery from the tenant. If the tithepayers of England had an advocate as able as the Attorney General has proved in behalf of the tithe owners, I do not think a proposal of this sort would have had a chance of success. We have heard a good deal about collusion between the tenants and the landlords to keep the tithe owner out of his tithe. I do not think there is much evidence of such a danger. Further, I would remind the House that the annual value of the land is to be decided by Schedule B of the Income Tax, which is sometimes far beyond the actual rent and tithe put together. We find over and over again, where the rent has almost vanished, that the Income Tax is still something considerable. We have heard, Mr. Speaker, a great deal about the give-and-take principle; but we find that all the changes in the Bill are on behalf of the tithe owner, while the tithepayer is entirely neglected, so that these assertions about compromise and give and take scarcely hold water. If the Church wants to rush to her destruction, why this is the very way to proceed. If the tithe owners act in defiance of the principles recognised in the early stages of this Bill, they cannot be surprised if, when the day of reckoning comes, though I do not wish to see it come, if the farmers say that "Whoever are the tithe owners, they cannot be harder taskmasters than those we have had." The Bill as it left this House ought to have been considered sufficient as far as the tithe owners are concerned. I do hope this House will not go back upon the recognised principle of the Bill by once more making the tenant farmer liable; for surely if the landlord's credit is good enough for everybody else, it ought to be good enough for the tithe owner. Surely, if the task of endeavouring to devise some scheme which would afford sufficient protection to all parties were seriously approached by the lawyers in this House, they would be able to arrive at a solution of the knotty problem without any unnecessary interference with the interests of the tenants.

(9.45.) MR. H. GARDNER: Whoever is responsible for this clause, whether the Government or Lord Selborne, has framed it in a very singular way, because those who pose as friends of the farmers and the agricultural interest are supporting it solely on the assumption that the whole of the farmers and landlords of this country desire to enter into a fraudulent conspiracy to defraud the tithe owners. They suppose that labouring as the farmers do in all parts of the country, and especially in my own Division, under the effects of long-continued agricultural depression, they are ready to pay large sums of money to their landlords, and in collusion with them, for the simple purpose of defrauding the tithe owners of what is their just due. It seems to me that the proposal is preposterous. In previous Debates on this unfortunate Bill I warned the House that if it did not consider the interests of the tithepayers the day would come when the Tory tenant and yeomen farmers of England would find themselves in line—shoulder to shoulder—with those who are helping forward the disestablishment of the Church. When I made that statement it was received with derision; but from the speech of my hon. Colleague opposite, it would appear that the words I then uttered were the absolute truth, which is now proved up to the hilt. If the Government rashly persist in bolstering up the tithe owners by clauses such as this, the farmers who have hitherto in the main supported the Tory Party will certainly at no distant day take action with those who seek the disestablishment of the Church.

*MR. C. W. GRAY: The hon. Member will excuse me. I did not say they would be certain to do this; but I said I should not be surprised, if the day of reckoning should come, to find a considerable change in the feelings of the yeomen farmers on this subject.

MR. H. GARDNER: What the hon. Member says bears out what I have already stated, that the yeomen farmers will on occasion find themselves on the same side as those who are opposed to the Church Establishment. The right hon. Gentleman opposite occupies a position on this question which, with all due respect, I venture to regard with pity. He must have been greatly irritated by the stringent criticisms coming from his own side of the House, especially when he heard the speech of the hon. Member for Shropshire. Because if ever there was a speech tending to convert hon. Members on that side of the House to our opinion with regard to this clause it was the speech of that hon. Gentleman. I should think the right hon. Gentleman must have said on hearing it, "Save me from my friends." One of the reasons why the Tithe Commutation Bill of 1836 was introduced was that it would encourage persons to put capital into the land which was not to be taxed in the future as highly as in the past. But this clause proposes to put an additional tax on the capital invested in land, because if an owner, wishing to improve his land, lets it at a low rent so that capital may be put into it, this clause will penalise that operation. If the clause is passed what will be the position of the present tenants? It is obvious that they cannot act in collusion with the owner; yet by the present clause that imputation is cast upon them. The object of this Bill, and the intention of the House in passing it, was to transfer the burden of the tithe from the occupier to the owner; but if we accept this clause, which I hope we shall not do, we shall contravene the general assent of the House to the original intention of the Bill by once more putting on the back of the occupier a burden which ought to rest on the shoulders of the owner.

(9.52.) MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): We have heard a great deal about the yeoman farmer; but the fact is, that this clause does not apply to the yeoman farmer at all—it is entirely confined to the occupier. I confess, however, that I do not like the clause. The main feature of the Bill has hitherto been the transfer of the tithe from the occupier to the owner. We now find that under this clause where the tithe is not paid by the owner recourse is to be had to the occupier. I think it is a bad clause. I am sorry it has been introduced, and I think the Government would act wisely in rejecting it.

*(9.54.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I object to this clause, because it treats the landowner as if he were prepared to enter into a conspiracy with his tenant to defraud the tithe owner. There could hardly have been a greater slur on the

landowner than is contained in this clause. Under these circumstances, I think the Government would do well to expunge the clause from the Bill. The Bill left the House of Commons after full Debate and consideration, and much giving way on both sides, as in some degree a fairly workable Bill; but it comes back from another place in a shape which is almost insulting to every landowner and tenant farmer in the country by suggesting that they are capable, by a system of underhand dealing, of defrauding the tithe owner.

*(9.56.) MR. J. G. TALBOT (Oxford University): I cannot help thinking that the Government would do well to adhere to the clause as it has come from the other House. Its main object is to prevent anything like collusion between owner and occupier. We have heard a good deal about bolstering up the tithe owner. I confess that I do not exactly understand what that means, because whilst in many cases the tithe owner is the clergyman of the parish, in others he is a layman, and the tithe is admitted to be in the nature of a property. This being so, whoever is the owner of the tithe has a right to it as his property, and has a right to have that property preserved. To preserve that right is the only object of this clause; it may be that it is not worded in the way hon. Gentlemen opposite desire, but its object certainly is to preserve the right to property which is legitimately owned. If the ownership of this property should be transferred to the nation it would be found that the nation would prove a harder taskmaster than the present tithe owner. The clause gives the tithe owner no new right, and if anyone could show that it did confer a right which the tithe owner does not now possess that would be a strong argument against it. With regard to what has been said of the occupier, the liability to the tithe which rests on the owner will, under this clause, should the occupier prove to be *pro hac vice* the owner, devolve upon him.

(10.0.) MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I think the right hon. Gentleman is under a misapprehension; but even at this, the eleventh hour, it is not too late for him to alter his mind. The only voice raised in support of this clause has been that of the hon. Member for Shropshire, for even the hon. Member for Oxford University merely supported the clause on the understanding that its operation should be limited to cases of collusion. At the present time it is not so limited. I object to the clause as a whole, because it provides a means by which a coach-and-four may be driven through the Act. The principle of the Act, so far as it has any principle at all, is that the tithe should be paid directly by the landlord; but this clause will enable that principle to be entirely discarded, and I venture to say that it will be discarded in cases far more numerous than have been imagined. The hon. Member for Carnarvon referred to the case of derelict farms. Now I know of an estate which has been derelict for four or five years. It is now to be let for a term of years at a nominal rent in the hope that the tenant may put capital into it, and that in that way the resources of the land may be adequately developed. I think it almost impossible to give a satisfactory reason for introducing a clause of this kind into the Bill. If it is to be aimed at cases of collusion, why not state so plainly? I think it most unfair on the part of the Attorney General and his colleagues to call upon us to devise a remedy for this state of things. I think the responsibility for devising such a remedy should rest with them alone.

(10.3.) MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): I was surprised to find this clause introduced in another place, and to hear an attempt to justify it here. If it is intended to aim it at conspiracy, why not state that on the face of the clause itself? If such a clause had been proposed by any Member on these benches when the Bill was in Committee in this House, I wonder what would have been said. Indeed, I think the authors of this clause altogether wrong the tenant farmer of Wales when they suggest he is willing to enter into a fraudulent conspiracy to prevent the tithe owner being paid. I pass that by; but let me ask the House to consider in how many cases this clause will work the grossest injustice. The person who proposed it certainly had the erroneous opinion in his mind that the occupier was the permanent holder of the land. We know, on the contrary, that he only occupies the land for a limited term. He may have a lease of the farm for seven years, and in the sixth year, if the tithe is not paid by the landlord, the receiver can come in to seize. The probability is, that the landlord will be an impecunious person; the amount of the tithe exceeds a year's rent, and where, I should like to know, is the tenant to recoup himself, seeing that the next year's rent, for which he is liable, will not be sufficient to cover the amount which he has been made to pay for tithe? I submit that you will be dealing most unjustly to the tenant if you insist on keeping this in the Bill, because he will not be able to recover what he has paid for the impecunious landlord.

(10.8.) The House divided:—Ayes 140; Noes 87.—(Div. List, No. 95.)

(10.18.) MR. S. T. EVANS: I beg to move to add, at the end of Clause B, the words—

> "Provided further that such occupier shall be entitled to recover from such landlord by action at law any such amount which shall have been recovered from him under this section as aforesaid as money paid on the account of such landlord."

It is admitted on all sides of the House that the obligation to pay tithe rent-charge is to fall upon the landlord, and in order to meet that the Government propose that in certain instances the tithe owner shall be able to recover by distress against the occupier. Could anything more improper be imagined? I think that, according to the elementary principles of justice, whenever anybody is called upon to pay a sum which another man ought to have paid, he should have the power of recovery from the latter by action at law. The object of my Amendment is to secure that, and I trust that I shall have the support of the Attorney General and of other legal authorities on that side. I think it monstrously unfair to say that the landlord who has to pay tithe rent-charge, and whom, under the Act of 1836, it was intended should pay that charge, is now to be allowed to avoid his liability, and that you should allow the tithe owner to recover by distress against the occupier, and put him to the expense and annoyance of having a distraint upon his premises in order that the debt of another may be recovered. Of course, it may be said that the tenant is to receive 4 per cent. upon the outlay; but that is not sufficient, and I think the reasons I have urged will satisfy the House of Commons that it is not fair that this liability to distress should be thrust upon the tenant.

Amendment proposed, to add at the end of the said Amendment the words—

> "Provided further that such occupier shall be entitled to recover from such landlord by action at law any such amount which shall have been recovered from him under this section as aforesaid as money paid on the account of such landlord."—(*Mr. S. T. Evans.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

(10.22.) SIR W. HARCOURT: I understand that the Government are willing to accept this Amendment. So far, so good, as regards giving some remedy to the occupier. But I should like to point out that, in order to avoid one evil, they are falling into another, because the basis of this measure has been that there is to be no personal liability imposed upon anyone. Yet it is perfectly obvious that the result of this will be to overthrow the whole basis of the measure, because, although it is founded upon the principle of no personal liability, you are adding to it now a proposal to make a personal liability on the part of the owner at the suit of the occupier. This shows that the matter has never been properly considered. You have got an acknowledged evil that may arise in the case of collusion. A natural thing would have been to draw up a clause pointed at collusion, and have limited it to that. The whole argument of the Attorney General was founded on the necessity of dealing with collusive facts. The Government have now got into a scrape, and the difficulty is how they can get out of it. Can it be done by simply giving the occupier a right of action at law against the owner? Bear in mind the argument which we have been urging, which is, that the owner may be impecunious. And then I would like to know what sort of remedy would it be to the occupier to give him a right of an action at law against the impecunious owner? It does not benefit him in the least. We want an answer on this point from the President of the Board of Trade. The Attorney General is no doubt most competent to deal with matters of law, but it is a remarkable fact that upon this clause, although appeal after appeal has been made by county Members on Benches opposite to the Government to give a satisfactory answer on this point, we have not heard a word from the President of the Board of Trade. The Attorney General has favoured us with a technical argument based entirely upon the assumption of collusion. It is quite plain, however, that this clause is not a collusion clause. It is a clause which will have a very wide operation, and although the Amendment of my hon. Friend may afford some remedy, it is not to be supposed that it in any way gets rid of the main difficulty. That will remain. We object to placing the primary liability on the occupier. You may apply remedies which may, more or less, repair that injustice, but still you have inflicted upon him a grievance. We have objected, and shall continue to object, to this proposal, and I think we are entitled to have from the right hon. Gentleman, who is responsible for the conduct of this Bill, an explanation why the House of Lords has introduced a clause altogether contrary to the fundamental principle of the Bill. That principle is that the tithe shall be a charge on the owner, and not on the occupier. The basis of this clause is that the charge shall fall on the occupier first, and not on the owner. The Government apparently are willing to accept that clause, which is a direct violation of the principle of their Bill. I repeat that the Bill embodies two principles. The first, that the owner is to be liable, and not the occupier, and the second, that there is to be no personal liability imposed. Yet this very clause makes the occupier liable instead of the owner, and it also imposes a personal liability. Why do the Government accept this clause? It is a clause which has been foisted into the Bill in the House of Lords. You would not have listened to it if it had been proposed in this House. You would have said that you would adhere to the principle of your Bill. Why, then, do you not take the wise course of dropping this proposal, and adhering to the principle of your Bill? It surely would be easy to devise some method of dealing with cases of collusion without infringing the fundamental principles of your Bill. It is not for us to discover methods of dealing with this difficulty. It is apparently not for you, because otherwise you would have discovered them in the House of Commons before the Bill went up to the Lords. You accept an Amendment which has not come from your own mint, but is a foreign coin altogether, and which will give a remedy that is obviously inadequate and unjust. We are bound to fight this as hard as we can. We say that this is a gross injustice to the tenant farmers of England; that it is contrary to the pledges you have given in this House to the effect that the occupier should not be made liable for the tithe. Here you put a direct liability on the occupier, and leave him to recover if he can. That is not only in violation of every pledge given by the Government, but is inconsistent with all the principles on which they passed the Bill through this House. If they choose to force through a clause of this kind, which injures the tenant farmers of England at the instance of the landlords, they will have to render an account of it. It is a very clear and plain issue, and we shall be glad to hear not a technical argument from the Attorney General, but an argument from the social and political advocate of this clause, the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, in answer to the appeals made to him by the County Representatives who sit behind him.

*(10.33.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The right hon. Gentleman complains that I did not address to the House a social and political argument on the Amendment of the hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan (Mr. S. Evans). It appeared to me that my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney General had adequately and sufficiently dealt with the subject already. The right hon. Gentleman has entered on this Amendment, as he often has done on other Amendments, upon the principle of the clause. I decline to follow the right hon. Gentleman into his argument on that point. If it has to be re-argued another opportunity will arise. He is very hard to please. If we had resisted the Amendment the right hon. Gentleman was, I think, prepared to denounce us for not giving the tenant a proper mode of recovery. As we accepted it, the right hon. Gentleman denounces us for imposing a personal liability on the landlord. We innocently thought that in this matter we were meeting an argument the right hon. Gentleman had himself addressed to the House. The right hon. Gentleman said a little time ago—

"What a terrible position the tenant would be in if the liability were imposed upon him when, perhaps, he and his landlord had agreed that he should hold the occupation on the condition that he should give the landlord £500 to go to Monte Carlo with!" We thought that the right hon. Gentleman was for once serious, and we have endeavoured to give the tenant in such a case the remedy to which he is entitled against this impecunious landlord.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Impecunious when he comes back from Monte Carlo.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I do not want to detain the House on this subject. We think the Amendment is a fair one, and, therefore, we have accepted it.

Question put, and agreed to.

(10.36.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I now propose to add a further Amendment. I think it has been assumed during the whole course of the discussion on the last Amendment that the landlord and tenant might enter into an agreement with the object of evading the operation of this Act, and the clause was inserted in order to meet such a case. It was inserted, first of all, at the suggestion of Members on this side of the House. It is fair in so far as it operates against any collusion between owner and occupier. The argument of the Attorney General in support of the clause was directed exclusively to such cases, and the hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford (Mr. Talbot) supported the clause on that express and exclusive condition. I shall expect the support of the hon. Gentleman, in endeavouring to confine the operation of the clause to cases of collusion. There are cases in which a *bonâ fide* arrangement may be entered into between landlord and tenant whereby the land may be made rent-free for a certain number of years. It is not right that the tenant should be penalised in those cases simply because the owner does not perform his obligations. The tenant will have carried out his contract. The addition I propose to the clause will, I think, meet every legitimate demand which can be made on the tithe owner.

Amendment proposed, after the words last added, to add the words—

"Provided also, that the Court shall not make such an order as is contemplated by this section in any case, unless it is satisfied that the contract of tenancy under which the occupier is in possession of the said lands is the result, in so far as the amount of rent reserved is concerned, of collusion between the said owner and occupier to evade payment of tithe."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

(10.40.) SIR R. WEBSTER: It has been suggested I spoke of fraud and fraudulent conspiracy. I certainly never referred to 'fraud or fraudulent conspiracy, and I am not aware I used the word collusion. I referred to several cases which were not collusive. I spoke of perfectly *bonâ fide* arrangements, and I remember distinctly using that expression. I pointed to cases of *bonâ fide* bargains whereby a landlord and tenant agreed that on consideration of money being spent on buildings, no rent should be paid for seven years. I argued that that would be a *bonâ fide* contract; but still a contract whereby the tenant or occupier would acquire an interest in the land and in the buildings without the liability of either party to pay tithe, because the owner would say there was no rent, and the occupier would say he was not liable. It seems to me the words of the hon. Gentleman will simply limit the remedy the House adopted by a large majority a few months ago to cases in which there is fraud and collusion. I think justice requires that the tithe owner should be protected in cases in which, without fraud, without collusion, there has been that kind of bargain made by the tenant with his eyes open, whereby he has elected not to pay the landlord rent, but to spend the money either on buildings or in benefitting his own occupation.

(10.45.) SIR W. HARCOURT: I cannot help wondering where it was—— [*Cries of* "Vote!"] Hon. Gentlemen opposite do not seem to like this discussion. I was going to ask where it was that the Member for Oxford University (Mr. Talbot) derived the impression to which he gave utterance so emphatically with regard to collusion. I know where I derived that impression. It was from the speech of the Attorney General, and no doubt the Member for the Oxford University derived it from the same source. It has been argued all through this clause that collusion is the offence that is aimed at. I hope that hon. Gentlemen opposite who have protested against this clause will notice that this is disclaimed by the Attorney

General, and that it is directed against legitimate, businesslike transactions between landlord and tenant. That, of course, is entirely inconsistent with what the President of the Board of Trade said earlier in the evening, namely, that the clause was suggested originally in order to prevent collusive action, and that it was adopted by the House of Lords on that ground. At the last moment, under the pressure of debate, the Attorney General says it has nothing to do with collusion. Let us take the last view of the Government that this has nothing to do with any improper attempt to evade tithe, but is aimed at the regular, orderly, and businesslike relations of landlord and tenant. I hope the President of the Board of Trade, when he condescends to speak, will disavow that position. But for the present I will take the view of the Attorney General that this is not to affect any legitimate——

SIR R. WEBSTER: I never said anything of the kind.

SIR W. HARCOURT: That this was not aimed at illegitimate collusion.

SIR R. WEBSTER: It is scarcely fair of the right hon. Gentleman. I was pointing out it was not aimed solely at that.

SIR W. HARCOURT: Did not the Attorney General state he never alluded to collusion? If he did not, then this Amendment is aimed at legitimate transactions. That is a perfectly fair statement of what the Attorney General said. Let us take that as the basis. Are you going in this Amendment, which is not part of your original policy, which has never been defended by the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill except on the ground of collusion and illegitimate relations, to launch against the tenant farmers of England a provision which makes them responsible for the payment of the tithe in perfectly legitimate transactions in relation to land? Why do you force on this clause in this way? If the hon. Member for the Oxford University is content to have this clause limited to cases of collusion, why do you accept it from the House of Lords as applicable to cases which are not cases of collusion? It is unfair in legitimate transactions between landlord and tenant to impose such liabilities on the occupier, and leave him to recover from the owner as best he may. Of all classes in England the tenant farmers are least in a position to advance money which they do not owe.

*(10.54.) SIR. M. HICKS BEACH: The right hon. Gentleman has entirely misrepresented, first, the argument of the Attorney General, and, secondly, the possible operation of this clause. The Attorney General did not use the argument which the right hon. Gentleman attributes to him—that this clause is not intended to apply to cases of collusion. It is intended so to apply; but the argument of the Attorney General was that there may be cases as between landlord and tenant which the Courts would not interpret to be cases of collusion, and yet which would be cases to which this clause ought to apply. The right hon. Gentleman also said that this clause would come into operation in the case of an ordinary agreement between landlord and tenant. That is a complete delusion. In such cases the rule is that a rack-rent is paid for the land; and in no such case would this clause come into operation. The only case in which the clause would come into operation would be one in which the landlord and the tenant had deliberately contracted together that the farm should be held at less than a rack-rent, either by the payment of a fine, or by the granting to the landlord of some corresponding advantage, with the result that the yearly rent by which the tenant held the farm would become insufficient to satisfy the sum ordered to be recovered for the tithe rent-charge. Anybody who knew the relations between landlord and tenant in England knew that such cases would be extremely rare.

*(10.58.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: I hope my hon. Friend will press this Amendment to a Division, because I think it puts the saddle on the right horse. The Attorney General has shifted his ground, and says that the clause is intended to apply to *bonâ fide* bargains between landlords and tenants. Under such circumstances the clause is a monstrously unjust one; it makes the occupier liable for the acts of the owner, for which he is not responsible. To throw this burden, in the first instance, upon the tenant and give him a remedy, which after all may be purely illusory, does seem to me, coming as it does from the self-styled farmers' friends, one of

the most extraordinary proceedings I have ever heard of. The only course open to the Government is to send the clause back to the House of Lords in the hope that they will return it to us in a shape that will be consistent and just.

(10.59.) MR. H. R. FARQUHARSON: I am quite aware where the idea of collusion came in. The very foundation of this Amendment in the Upper House was the idea of collusion. So long as I believe that the clause is aimed purely at collusion I have no objection to it, except that I consider it to be a great insult to the landowners and tenant-farmers of the country. Now, however, it is clear that it is aimed at other cases. I can give two very common cases in which it will prevent landlords getting tenants at all. In the first place, there are innumerable cases where landlords let their farms during the first few years at very small rents. That is often owing to the foulness of the land or other circumstances. Sometimes a tenant will not take land at a low rent if he has to pay the tithe upon it. Then, again, in the case of buildings or improvements, these a tenant may contract to construct on condition of a low rent; this will be put an end to if the tenant is under this liability. The tithe owner will be the gainer by an arrangement of the kind, for if buildings are erected and improvements made the certainty and regularity of the payment of tithe is assured. I hope the Government will agree to define the clause so that it shall deal only with cases of collusion, and if it is so confined it will not be put in force so long as landlords and tenants exist on their present relations.

(11.1.) MR. S. T. EVANS: I think this Amendment is well calculated to test the *bona fides* of the Government in relation to this clause. We pay them the compliment of supposing that the clause is accepted as a means of dealing with cases of collusion; but if the Government say "no" to that they put themselves in a very awkward position, and make a monstrous and indefensible proposition. If it is intended to deal only with cases of collusion I join with my hon. Friend opposite in urging the Government to say so. There has been an interesting discussion, and in relation to what the Attorney General has said

I am fortunately able to justify the statement of my hon. Friend that the object with which this Amendment was introduced in the House of Lords was to meet cases of collusion, and such cases only. The Attorney General need not be ashamed to have introduced the word collusion, for it was used by the Prime Minister himself. It will be interesting to the House to hear what the Prime Minister actually said. In the discussion of the Amendment the noble Lord said——

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I rise to order, Sir. Is it order for the hon. Member to quote from Debates in the other House during the present Session?

SIR W. HARCOURT: Upon that point, Sir, may I ask you whether on consideration of Lords' Amendments, it is permissible, or not, to discuss the grounds upon which an Amendment was adopted in another place?

*MR. SPEAKER: No doubt it would not be the proper Parliamentary course to refer at length to Debates in another place, but it may be necessary to refer in some form to a statement upon which an Amendment has been founded.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Following upon your ruling, Sir, I venture to think that the House would prefer that I should not use words of my own in giving my impression of what took place, but that I should cite the very words used by the Prime Minister. This is the *Hansard* record of what was said—

"After the matter has been enormously discussed in private, though no doubt it is surrounded with difficulties on every side" ——

*MR. J. G. TALBOT: I rise to order, Sir. I understand you to say, Sir, that it would be out of order to quote words used in Debate in another place, though an hon. Member has a right to refer to arguments used.

*MR. SPEAKER: No, I did not say that, if the hon. Gentleman will excuse me for saying so. I did not say it would be irregular or unparliamentary; I said to follow in detail the arguments used in another place would be irregular, but to simply quote words used would be to quote the foundation of the Amendment.

MR. S. T. EVANS: It seems to me that these points of order hon. Members are so anxious to raise show the anxiety to keep out of view the very object with the Amendment was introduced. I hope I may now proceed to read the words used by the Prime Minister in reply to the speech of Lord Selborne in moving the Amendment:—

> "After the matter has been enormously discussed in private, though no doubt it is surrounded with difficulties on every side, no remedy has been proposed that is entirely satisfactory. Although it is somewhat clumsy, and will operate rather by deterring the owner than by any effect of its own operation, still it will practically prevent that which we have reason to apprehend, namely, a collusive arrangement of the terms of occupancy for the purpose of evading payment of the tithe rent-charge. When my noble and learned Friend first brought this question before the House, I thought it was rather like the question of the Confessor who asked the groom 'whether he ever greased the horses' teeth in order to prevent them from eating oats'—'No, but I will take care to do it next time,' was the answer of the groom. I thought that the suggestion of the noble and learned Lord was due rather to his own enormous ingenuity"—

thereby indicating his belief that there would not be many cases of collusion—

> "and would rather have a tendency to raise in the minds of evil-thinking men some idea of evading the rent-charge by a method which they never would have thought of themselves. When the noble and learned Lord had once raised it he was certainly bound to find a remedy, and I think the remedy proposed would be satisfactory."

Now, that is the argument from this side on the question. We are willing, if you think there will be cases of collusion between landlord and tenant, although we disagree entirely with the Amendment as a whole, and hope to fight it to the bitter end, yet to confine the clause so that it shall be so far harmless. We propose our Amendment so that it shall not extend to *bonâ fide* arrangement as to the terms of occupancy, which would be manifestly unfair, manifestly unjust, and would introduce the greatest amount of friction in the operation of such a provision. It is wholly unreasonable that an occupier, having made his arrangements for occupation, should then find himself called upon to guarantee a debt due from his landlord. The Attorney General has said the words are meant to deal with cases where there is a beneficial lease; but I draw attention to the words, which say that "where there is not sufficient rent to cover the tithe." This is not a case of nominal rent even. The Attorney General went on to say that if a tenant enters into a *bonâ fide* arrangement of this kind he must do it with his eyes open. But why should he be made to pay the tithe rent-charge in any case? I think the Government are taking a mistaken view of the application of the clause. Let me put this case: Suppose a tenant says to his landlord, "My house is in an unsound condition; the roof is nearly off, and is a source of danger to myself and my family. I want you to rebuild or re-roof the house." The landlord, from too frequent visits to Monte Carlo or from any other reason, is not in a position to undertake the repairs. He says, "I have no money to put a new roof on the place; but I am quite willing that you should do it and keep back the cost from the rent." Now, is it fair in a case of that kind to say to the occupier, "You must pay the debt which the Act says the landlord is to pay and no one else?" The tenant to have his eyes open! Why, I say, is the tenant to guarantee this more than any other debt of his landlord? It will be remembered that two or three years ago the great argument for introducing a Tithe Rent-charge Recovery Bill was put by the Prime Minister in this way: The law as it at present stands makes the occupier pay the debt of another, and difficulties arise from the fact of this debt being due from the landlord, and yet the occupier is made to pay it. We sweep this away, we get rid of that difficulty, and yet here the Government at the suggestion of their ultra ecclesiastical supporters propose to bring in the very same difficulty which Lord Salisbury wanted to abolish in the Tithes Bill of—I think it was, 1887. Let the clause be confined to cases of collusion only. It will still be a bad clause, and still ought to be thrown out, and to this we shall direct our efforts.

MR. TOMLINSON: I only wish to say that the hon. Member seems to forget the nature of tithe, and that by the Bill the tithe rent-charge is not a debt due from the landlord, and if it were so there would be no necessity for this clause at all.

(11.13.) MR. H. GARDNER: I confess I am entirely in a fog as to what the Government intend by the clause, because we are told in the first place by no less an authority than the Prime Minister, and I imagined the same from the introductory remarks of the President of the Board of Trade, that it was intended to prevent a fraudulent conspiracy between owner and tenant to defraud the tithe owner of his just and legitimate debt. But the Attorney General just now told us this was not the only case, but, said the hon. and learned Gentleman, to my astonishment, and I think to the astonishment of every hon. Gentleman on the other side who represent an agricultural constituency, the clause is not framed to prevent collusion.

SIR R. WEBSTER: Only.

MR. H. GARDNER: Not against collusion only, but it was also to meet *bonâ fide* cases and arrangements made in the interest of agriculture and the benefit of an industry not, I am sorry to say, at the present moment in such a flourishing condition as it ought to be. Now, our predecessors in this House in Debates upon the Act of 1836, pointed out that one of the objects of the Act was to forward the interests of agriculture and assist capital being put into the land. Again and again when this Tithe Bill has been before the House the Government have declared that nothing in the Bill shall put agriculture in a worse position than it is in under the Act of 1836. But this action of the Government now will have a direct tendency to prevent capital being put into the land. It is entirely against the principle laid down in past Debates that the Bill shall not put tenant or landlord in a worse position than that in which they were placed by the legislation of 1836. The President of the Board of Trade says this is to apply to cases in which a man pays down a sum of £500 and no rent afterwards, cases where, in fact, a man gets a beneficial lease. It is a most extraordinary proposition to put the clause in operation in such a case. I hope that hon. Gentlemen opposite who have the agricultural interest of the country at heart will mark this point. The fact is, the whole object of the clause is to screw out the uttermost farthing of the tithe; and once again we have, on this Amendment come down to us from the Lords, a proposal in the tithe owners' interest which, on former occasions, has been repudiated by the Government.

*(11.16.) MR. SYDNEY GEDGE: I may remind hon. Members that the clause simply does that in one case which the law now does in all cases. The Bill will relieve the occupier in all other cases, but this is an exceptional case in which, owing to the arrangements entered into between occupier and tenant, the tithe owner cannot get his tithe rent-charge from the rent. When a man takes a farm under an agreement of the nature which the hon. Member has referred to, he makes a sort of purchase, and he must ascertain in making his bargain that no charge comes in before his interest. The existence of the tithe rent-charge is known, and to what has been urged about the interest of agriculture and beneficial leases there is the reply that the application of this clause is universal now, and it has not been attended with those results Members apprehend.

(11.17.) MR. J. BRYN ROBERTS: It seems to me that the same arguments which support the principle of Clause 5 and the remission of tithe rent-charge where it exceeds two-thirds of the rent, equally apply against this clause. One object of the Bill, it has often been stated, is to prevent land being thrown out of cultivation, and thus the Bill is in the interests of agriculture. But here is a case in which the land, having gone out of cultivation, or having no buildings, or standing in need of improvement without which it would not be possible it should be brought into cultivation—the land must be let at a nominal rent. Now, if it is right to remit tithe rent-charge where it exceeds two-thirds of the value of the property, equally then the tithe should be remitted in these cases I mention, or else the land will pass out of cultivation.

*(11.19.) SIR J. SWINBURNE: I hope the Government will re-consider this point. Of course there would be reason for the Amendment if it were confined to cases of collusion between landlord and tenant, though I think there is very little possibility of such a conspiracy arising. Indeed, it is casting a most undeserved slur upon the agricultural classes to introduce a penal clause like this. I can speak as a landowner and a tithe owner, and I am bound to say that I have heard from no member of either class any approval of this clause, and I am at a loss to understand why the other House inserted the clause, and why Her Majesty's Government accepted it.

(11.22.) The House divided:—Ayes 107; Noes 172.—(Div. List, No. 96.)

(11.36.) MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I beg to move to insert at the end of the clause the following words:—

"Provided also that this section shall not apply to cases where the contract of tenancy was entered into before the passing of this Act."

I move this for the purpose of confining the operation of the clause to tenancies created exclusively after the passing of the Act, and I think the Amendment is obviously such a fair one that the Government will accede to it. It cannot be said that existing contracts were made in view of a law of this kind; but in the future, whenever new tenancies come into existence, the contracting parties will have the clause in view. When an owner lets his land to an occupier the first thing he will have regard to will be the fact that the occupier may at some time or other be held liable to pay the tithe rent-charge. The occupiers in such cases could not complain to the same extent as occupiers who have entered into contracts before the passing of the Act. Parties who enter into contracts after the passing of the Act will be presumed to be aware of this clause, which cannot be the case in regard to tenancies entered into before the passing of the Act. We hear a great deal about respect that is due to contract. Well, I cannot conceive how contracts can be respected by Welsh tenant farmers or Irish tenant farmers when such an example is set them of disrespect for contracts by Her Majesty's Government. Existing contracts are set aside by the clause. I am anxious, as one who believes that tithe is national property, that nothing should be done to fritter it away, or to enter into agreements whereby the payment of it should be avoided. Therefore it was that an hon. Friend and I first proposed this clause. If it is confined to tenancies created after the passing of the Act the hardship will not be great.

Amendment proposed, after the words last added, to add the words—

"Provided also that this section shall not apply to cases where the contract of tenancy was entered into before the passing of this Act."—(*Mr. Lloyd-George.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

*(11.40.) Sir M. HICKS BEACH: I cannot understand the arguments in favour of this proposition. I can see no reason in justice why any difference should be made between the two classes of tenancies, and the Government certainly could not accept the Amendment.

Sir W. HARCOURT: The real reason why the Amendment is proposed is that there is a general feeling against retrospective legislation. Before the passing of the Act the occupying tenant at a rack-rent and the occupying tenant on a beneficial lease were not in the same situation. Now, for the first time, you are proposing to make the occupying tenant under a beneficial lease responsible in the way the occupying tenant at a rack-rent is made responsible. What I contend is that if the Government choose to make legislation of this kind, which I protest against, at all events, they should not make it retrospective in regard to antecedent contracts. What we are trying to do is to mitigate the clause. With one exception the Government have refused all mitigations we have proposed, and that is why we have been obliged to continue so far in opposition to this clause. It is quite plain that if you are to embark on new legislation of this kind you ought to give the tithe-rent owner his remedy direct against the landowner, instead of getting at the owner through the occupier. I will tell you why you did not. It was because the clause comes to you from a House in the interest of the landowners. If all you desire is to secure the tithe to the tithe owner, do you not in the clause go direct against the man who admittedly ought to pay? It is because the House of Lords will not allow you to do it. ["Oh, oh!" *from the Ministerial Benches.*] Yes, and you prefer, in order to secure the tithe, to go against the tenant-farmer, and, having got the money out of the tenant's pocket, to leave that unhappy person to fight it out with the landowner. That is an unjust proceeding—unjust to the tenants of the future, and still more unjust to the tenants of the past, who might not have entered into their present contracts if they had known it would expose them to this liability. We shall protest to the last against this clause, and if we cannot succeed in mitigating its injustice, at all events we shall have done our part.

(11.45.) Mr. S. T. EVANS: We need not apologise for getting up over and over again and trying to mitigate this clause, which is admitted to be a most severe one. The Government say the clause is the best they can propose, but there is, apparently, a feeling on both sides of the House that if it could be possible to get another clause to work instead of the one we are dealing with now it would be better. Of all the Amendments to this part of the Bill which have come down from the House of Lords this seems to me the least reasonable. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade does not understand how there can be any argument in favour of the Amendment, but if he will only consult the Crown Officers he will soon learn the reason for it. On the last Amendment on which we divided the Attorney General said there was no hardship in applying this Amendment to collusive cases as well as others, because the occupier has entered into his arrangement with the landowner with his eyes open. I hope he will convince the President of the Board of Trade, who has a mind more open to conviction than any right hon. Gentleman on the Front Ministerial Bench. Why are you going to impose this obligation on men who did not enter into the contract with their eyes open? There is a general argument against retrospective legislation. You never make it retrospective, or interfere with existing contracts, unless there is a strong case for it. But now you are doing both these things; therefore, on this argument, and on the argument that you ought not to oppress the occupier on account of the default of a landlord, I say you should not listen to the recommendations that come from the House of Lords.

*(11.50.) Mr. G. OSBORNE MORGAN: This clause is so mischievous that I welcome any Amendment that will mitigate it. The right hon. Gentleman said that under the law as it stood the tenant was liable for these payments. No doubt that is so, but under the Bill we are making a new departure. The Bill transfers the burden from the shoulders of the tenant to those of the landlord, and at the same time this clause imposes a distinction which has never existed before. The Amendment proceeds on an intelligible basis—one recognised over and over again in the House—namely, that there is a distinction between prospective and retrospective legislation.

(11.52.) Mr. H. GARDNER: I think that the argument that a tenant should not be called upon to undertake a contract by which he will be under an obligation he by no means foresaw is one which requires some reply from the Government. I understand that this is a measure, the primary intention of which is to make the owner responsible, and not the occupier, and that in no contemplated case is the occupier to be in any way responsible for the payment of tithe rent-charge. This unhappy clause does place on the occupier a liability which has never been contemplated by the Bill, and I trust that my hon. Friend will press his very reasonable Amendment.

(11.54.) The House divided:—Ayes 106; Noes 167.—(Div. List, No. 97.)

Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."

It being after midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow at Two of the clock.

SAVINGS BANKS BILL.—(No. 220.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN BILL [LORDS] (No. 216.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1 amended, and agreed to.

Clause 2 amended, and agreed to.

Clause 3.

Mr. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I hope the Attorney General will accept an Amendment I have to propose in line 24. There are thousands of cases in which pauper children are brought up from an early age by Boards of Guardians and boarded out. The object of the Amendment is to restrict the power of parents to take away these children at the age of 12 and 13 from the schools in which they are learning some useful trade in order that they may make a profit out of them. We say that if the parent allows the children to be brought up at other people's expense, the Court ought not to make an order for their delivery to the parents unless they first satisfy the Court that they are fit and proper persons to have custody of the children. By adopting my Amendment we may save hundreds of thousands of children from drifting into the criminal classes, and ensure their being brought up as useful citizens. I move, therefore, in Clause 3, page 1, line 24, after the word "expense," to insert the words "or by the Guardians of the Poor Law Union."

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): As there must be a further stage of this Bill, I would ask the hon. Member not to press his Amendment, but simply to put it upon the Paper so that it may be considered by the Lord Chancellor, who has carefully gone into the whole question involved in the provisions of this measure. The matter can then be dealt with on the Report stage.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

*MR. BIRRELL (Fife, W.): I have to move an Amendment the object of which is simply to interfere with the rights of those persons who, being habitual drunkards, tramps, or beggars, have abandoned their children and allowed them to be brought up by other persons. The Amendment is as follows:—

> "Clause 3, page 1, line 28, after 'parent insert, 'if it be proved that the parent is an habitual drunkard, a tramp, a beggar, or a frequenter of a common lodging-house, or casual ward, or.'"

My object is to limit the discretion which the Judges would otherwise have under this clause. I think that, owing to the variety of opinions which prevail as to how far drunkenness is a disqualification for the exercise of the parental duty, the House would do well to say distinctly that if it be proved that a parent, having already deserted his child, is an habitual drunkard, a tramp, a beggar, or a frequenter of a common lodging-house, or casual ward, he shall not be deemed a fit person to have the custody of his children. I ask the Attorney General to insert in the Bill that parents coming within the category I have named shall be considered unfit. The proposal will not in any way restrict the intention of the Bill—it is simply a definition. Should he be unable to accept the Amendment, my feeling in favour of the Bill is so exceedingly strong that I will not press it. I do hope, however, that the Attorney General will give it serious consideration.

(12.17.) SIR R. WEBSTER: I am most unwilling to fetter the discretion of the Court by adopting the form of words suggested. And our objection is that the Bill provides that a parent who has deserted his child shall not be allowed its custody again until he has satisfied the Court of his fitness. I am strongly of opinion that it would be better to leave the Bill as it stands than to insert defining words.

*MR. BIRRELL: As the Attorney General cannot see his way to accepting my Amendment, I beg leave to withdraw it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause agreed to.

*(12.20.) MR. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I hope that my hon. and learned Friend will be able to accept the clause I have put on the Paper, because it would aid the management of industrial schools in placing out boys and freeing them from the evil influences of unworthy parents, who, having abandoned their children for many years, seek them out again for sordid reasons, with the result that the children frequently lapse again into crime.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, after Clause 4, to insert the following clause:—

> "If a child detained in or placed out on license from a certified industrial school conducts himself well, the managers of the school may, with his own consent, apprentice the child to, or dispose of him in, any trade, calling, service, or by emigration, notwithstanding that his period of detention has not expired; and such apprenticing or disposition shall be as valid as if the managers were the parents of the child.
>
> "Provided that, unless twelve months of the period of detention allotted to the child have expired, the consent of the Secretary of State shall also be required to the exercise of any power under this section."—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

(12.22.) Question proposed, "That the Clause be read now a second time."

(12.23.) SIR R. WEBSTER: I have no objection to the clause, save that it is one which is without the matters which are to be dealt with by this Bill. To take up a matter which is not clearly germane to this Bill would open up a very serious question. I prefer not to insert the clause, because it seems to me doubtful. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary may introduce it in his Bill on the subject.

*(12.25.) MR. HOWARD VINCENT: I understood from what the right hon. Gentleman the Home Secretary said that it was not his intention to introduce a Bill.

(12.26.) THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham, E.): I did not say it was not my intention, but that at the Home Office we are so overwhelmed with work that it is difficult to find an opportunity of pushing forward the Bill.

*(12.27.) MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): There is no doubt that the power asked for by this clause is very much required, because of the way in which wretched parents get hold of their children after they have left the industrial school and drag them again down to vice. If the Industrial Schools Bill is brought in I shall support this clause—that is, if it cannot be adopted now.

*(12.29.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): This clause makes very little alteration in the law, and still less in the practice. It simply provides that the child shall be disposed of by enlistment or emigration at any time instead of having to wait 18 months, whereas under the present system the same result can at any time be obtained in proper cases by discharging the child. Such discharge is subject to the consent of the Secretary of State.

*MR. HOWARD VINCENT: Will my right hon. Friend introduce a short Bill dealing with this subject?

MR. MATTHEWS: I do not think it would be possible to introduce a Bill dealing alone with the disposal of children.

*MR. HOWARD VINCENT: I will not press the clause now, Sir, but will put it down on Report.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered to-morrow at two of the clock.

LAW AGENTS (SCOTLAND) BILL.
(No. 69.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Thursday, 9th April.

LIQUOR TRAFFIC LOCAL VETO (WALES) BILL.—(No. 1.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

RIFLE RANGES.

Ordered, That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the difficulties now attending the acquisition of adequate Rifle Range accommodation in the United Kingdom.—(*Mr. Howard Vincent.*)

MOTION.

EDUCATIONAL ENDOWMENTS (IRELAND) ACT, 1885 (GILSON SCHOOLS).

RESOLUTION.

*(12.30.) MR. KNOX (Cavan, W.): I rise to move—

> "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her consent from a Scheme for the management of the Gilson Schools, Oldcastle, County Meath, provisionally approved by the Lords Justices in Council on the 13th November, 1890, unless provision be made in the Scheme for the representation of the Board of Guardians of the Oldcastle Union upon the Governing Body of the said Schools."

I should like to explain that the scheme relates to a Charity amounting to about £800 a year, which is intended to be applied to the purposes of technical education, and I think there could be no better object. Under the will of Mr. Gilson the funds were bequeathed for the purposes of an elementary school. It was expressly provided in the Will that the school was to be open to all denominations. The master might be a Catholic or a Protestant. There was to be no distinction of religion in the management. The school was not a success, and the scheme now proposes to apply the money to purposes of technical education. It is agreed on all hands that no better object could be found, but a difference has arisen as to the constitution of the Governing Body of the Charity. The objection is that no popular authority is represented on that Body. A scheme was first drawn up by Lord Justice FitzGibbon and Lord Justice Naish, and under their scheme the Governing Body was to consist of two persons appointed by the Protestant Bishop of Meath, two by the Catholic Bishop of Meath, one person representing the National Education Board, two persons representing the Board of Guardians of the Oldcastle Union, and two persons co-opted by the other members of the Board. But, for some reason, religious bigotry came in, and the scheme was furiously opposed by a partisan body of the Privy Council, presided over by Lord Ashbourne, whose tendencies I need not describe to the House. This partisan body struck out of the scheme the representatives of the Board of Guardians on the ground that that Board might appoint two Roman Catholics. The object of the school is to teach the people to make good butter, and can it make any difference whether there is one more Catholic or one more Protestant on the Governing Body? In the North of Ireland in similar cases a Protestant majority is always given on the Governing Body. The majority of the people of Meath are Catholics; 88 per cent. of the children hitherto attending the school are Catholics, and the Catholics might fairly claim a Catholic majority upon the Governing Body. But they do not ask for a Catholic majority as such. They merely ask that the Board of Guardians, who under the Technical Instruction Act, 1889, are the Local Authority for the purpose of technical education, should not be deprived of the right to appoint two members of the Governing Body of a technical institute. I submit that the House ought to refuse its sanction to a scheme drawn up on such bigoted and narrow principles. I wish to point out, also, that this Union forms part of three Parliamentary Divisions, and two of them are represented by Protestants, although the vast majority of the people are Catholics. In the circumstances, it would be the narrowest bigotry to refuse to the Guardians of the Oldcastle Union the right to nominate two Governors on this Trust.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty, praying Her to withhold Her consent from a Scheme for the management of the Gilson Schools, Oldcastle, County Meath, provisionally approved by the Lords Justices in Council on the 13th November, 1890, unless provision be made in the Scheme for the representation of the Board of Guardians of the Oldcastle Union upon the Governing Body of the said Schools."

(12.40.) THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The hon. and learned Member, in the lucid statement which he has just made to the House, has asked it to dissent from the opinion deliberately arrived at by the Privy Council of Ireland. What is his main reason for objecting to the scheme? It is that it makes no provision for the representation of the Board of Guardians on the Board of Management of the school. I should like to ask whether Boards of Guardians are in any way specially qualified to supervise educational institutions? To lay down that they are would be to establish a dangerous principle. The hon. and learned Member has, I think, missed the real point which influenced the Privy Council in coming to a decision. Under the will of Mr. Gilson the school is to be for the benefit both of Protestants and Catholics, and in order that their interests may be considered equally the will lays down that the management of the school shall be divided between Protestants and Catholics, and the institution is put under the control of the clergyman of the parish and of the priest. Some 30 years ago the question of the management was brought before the Court of Chancery in England, and the Court held that the representation on the Board of Management should be equal as between Roman Catholics and Protestants, adding as additional manager the Chief Secretary, who might or might not be a Protestant. Subsequently the Privy Council in Ireland came to the same conclusion. The plan advocated by the hon. and learned Member would probably give an absolute majority on the Board of Management to the Roman Catholics. This the hon. Member would probably justify by saying that the Roman Catholic population of the district is larger than the Protestant. No doubt it is, but it was so also at the time when the testator made his will and expressed his intentions. The only way to ensure fairness is by preserving the equal representation of both creeds upon the Board. If there is to be a permanent

Roman Catholic majority on the Board, who can doubt that the head master would always be chosen from amongst those who professed that religion?

*MR. KNOX: Special provision is made that one of the masters shall be a Protestant.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: But that does not affect the head master. I hope the House will reject the Resolution moved by the hon. and learned Member. Considering that the Government have on their side the will of the testator and the opinion of the English Court of Chancery and of the Irish Privy Council, I hold distinctly that no sufficient grounds have been shown for departing from the practice which has hitherto prevailed.

*(12.51.) SIR J. POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): We have been told by the right hon. Gentleman that it was the wish of the testator that the managers of this Charity should be equally divided, so far as religious opinions are concerned. But the right hon. Gentleman did not quote the will of the testator, and he has given us no authority whatever for that statement; but has only said what he believes to have been the wish of the testator. But I find in the opinion recorded by Lords Justices FitzGibbon and Naish a very different view, for they declare that "equal denominational representation was not provided for by the founder in his will, or by the present Chancery Scheme." Therefore, the view of my hon. Friend (Mr. Knox) was correct, while the Chief Secretary is mistaken in his idea of the will. But the statement of the right hon. Gentleman threw light on something more important; it threw light on the intentions of the Government with regard to Irish Local Government, and on this point we shall have something to say on a future occasion.

(12.53.) COLONEL WARING (Down, N.): I may say that the hon. Member who last spoke has not quoted the will of the founder, nor did the proposer of the Motion.

*MR. KNOX: But I have it here.

COLONEL WARING: At any rate, we on this side have in our favour the decision of the Court of Chancery in 1858, which distinctly provided that the two denominations shall be equally represented. The school will be closed to Protestant children if the Governors are in a large majority Roman Catholics, and I think it would be perfectly monstrous if that were permitted. I trust that this House will support the decision of Her Majesty's Privy Council. I was surprised to hear it called a partisan body, and do not think such an observation in order.

*(12.58.) MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): As I have had a good deal to do with schemes of this nature, I may, perhaps, be permitted to intervene in this Debate. As I understand the question, this testator lived 80 years ago, and the point is not what were his wishes in regard to this Charity, but what is the best scheme for administering the Charity now. I submit it is altogether out of place for the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary to rest upon a Judgment of the Court of Chancery delivered 30 years ago. One of the main objects of the Endowed Schools Act was to get rid of the intervention of the Court of Chancery so as to entrust the localities specially interested with the duties of dealing with them. Is it not a reasonable and natural thing that the people of the district most affected should have a voice in the government of the schools? In many cases endowed schools may be a curse rather than a blessing to the place—a curse if they are not conducted according to the best spirit of the time. I do hope the House will assent to this Motion, because, whilst it gives, to my mind, too limited an amount of popular government, it at any rate proposes to give some. It also provides that the institution shall be carried on largely in accordance with the intentions of the founder, and, as far as I can see, there is nothing in the scheme which is at all contrary to the will. It is in accordance with the principle which Parliament has over and over again acted upon. I hope the House will assent to the Motion.

(1.0.) The House divided:—Ayes 36; Noes 88.—(Div. List, No. 98.)

It being after One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at ten minutes after One o'clock

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Friday, 20th March, 1891.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Earl of Milltown—Petition of Henry Earl of Milltown in the Peerage of Ireland, claiming a right to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland; read, and referred to the Lord Chancellor to consider and report thereupon to the House.

Lord Dunsany—Petition of John William Plunkett, Baron Dunsany in the Peerage of Ireland, claiming a right to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland; read, and referred to the Lord Chancellor to consider and report thereupon to the House.

BERKELEY PEERAGE.

Petition of Randal Mowbray Thomas Berkeley, claiming to be Earl of Berkeley, for leave, on the consideration of his Petition to Her Majesty, to use the evidence adduced in the case of the claim of William Fitzhardinge Berkeley to the Earldom of Berkeley in 1811, and in the case of the claim of the Right Hon. Sir Maurice Frederick Fitzhardinge Berkeley to the Barony of Berkeley in 1859, and that he may be relieved from the expense of reprinting such evidence; read, and referred to the Committee for Privileges.

THE ROYAL ACADEMY.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

Lord SANDHURST: My Lords, I desire to put a question to the noble Marquess the Prime Minister, of which I have given him private notice. It has reference to an announcement by the Council of the Royal Academy, which has appeared in the usual channels of information, that the days for the taking in of pictures would be Good Friday, Saturday, and Easter Monday. It can hardly be said that these are convenient days. Some exception might be taken to putting Good Friday to such a use, and on that point it might be interesting to hear what the Chaplain to the Council, the Archbishop of York, might have to say. But there are secular reasons why the proposed days are objectionable—inconvenient, if not obnoxious. In the first place, the days chosen are extremely inconvenient for communication and delivery of packages, owing to the general holiday traffic. The proposal interferes very much with the Easter holiday making, which is general for all classes, and especially there are large numbers of parcel porters and others, especially frame-makers, of whom there are very many, and amongst whom there is very great dissatisfaction. It will, undoubtedly, I am told, cause a great deal of work to be done on Sunday. I am informed, also, that the work of taking in will not be over before 1 a.m. on Tuesday, and there is great danger of damage to valuable works of art. The proposal also causes great inconvenience and dissatisfaction amongst a very large number of the artists themselves, because in a great many cases they will be unable to get their works into the Academy until very late. I therefore ask, seeing that the Royal Academy derives its privileges from the Crown, whether Her Majesty's Government would make a protest as to these proposed taking-in days, which are obnoxious to those most concerned, and on many grounds inexpedient, with the view of seeing whether any alteration can be made in them?

The PRIME MINISTER and SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of Salisbury): I am afraid, my Lords, the Government can hardly admit themselves to be responsible for all the acts of those who have the direction of affairs at the Royal Academy or other institutions which may derive their privileges from the Crown. It would add very seriously to our responsibilities. But, at the same time, the question of which the noble Lord has given me private notice seems, if I may say so, an extremely reasonable question; and if I had been able to do so I should have been very glad to have done what he wishes, namely, to have asked from the Council of the Royal Academy some reason to give to the House for the course they have taken in this matter. But the time was too short, and I have not been able to do so. I feel, however, that the statement of the noble Lord will carry conviction, at all events, to the minds of the Council that there is *primâ facie* a considerable difficulty in the particular arrangement they have adopted. We all know that the interval between next Thursday and the Tuesday following is, in addition to its sacred character, a very popular holiday, and a popular holiday is not the best of times in which to get work of this kind done. I believe that representations from the noble Lord will be quite as effective as any made by the Government, and I can only trust that the Council of the Royal Academy will pay attention to the very just considerations the noble Lord has adduced, and will apply what remedy they can. If the period of the Session had permitted, I should have been glad to have given the noble Lord another answer.

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: As the noble Lord has mentioned my brother the Archbishop of York, whose office as Chaplain to the Royal Academy has always been highly esteemed, I think, in his absence, I ought to say that I am quite sure what his view of the subject would be. There are a very large number, indeed, both of Church people, Roman Catholics, and Nonconformists whose religious feelings would be much injured by the setting apart, as the Council of the Royal Academy seems to have done, Good Friday for such hard work as the delivery of the pictures, and who would feel that numbers of their people were being hindered from taking part in the religious observance of the day. The observance of Good Friday has greatly increased in the last few years, I think, with great satisfaction to people at large. I must thank the noble Marquess at the head of the Government, in the name of my brother and myself, and also of a large proportion of the population, for having stated that he trusts the Council of the Royal Academy will pay attention to the representations of the noble Lord. I hope the noble Lord will persevere in them, and that he will receive from the President a satisfactory reply.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (No. 1) BILL.

Read 2ª (according to order): Then Standing Orders Nos. XXXIX. and XLV. considered (according to order), and dispensed with: Committee negatived; Bill read 3ª, and passed.

The Marquess of Salisbury

ARMY (ANNUAL) BILL.—(No. 75.)

Read 2ª (according to order): Then Standing Orders Nos. XXXIX. and XLV. considered (according to order), and dispensed with: Committee negatived: Bill read 3ª, and passed.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) BILL. [H.L.]—(No. 17.)

Read 3ª (according to order); amendments made: Bill passed, and sent to the Commons.

CLERGY DISCIPLINE (IMMORALITY) BILL [H.L.]—(No. 68.)

THIRD READING.

Order of the Day for the Third Reading, read.

*THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY: My Lords, before proceeding to move the Third Reading of this Bill, I would ask your Lordships' permission to make a short statement for the purpose of removing a misapprehension which I believe exists in some quarters that a new principle is introduced in this Bill by its enacting the deprivation of a clergyman upon conviction of treason, felony, or grave misdemeanour. It is supposed by some that the sentence of a Civil Court has not hitherto taken effect in that way, and that this is, therefore, a new principle introduced into ecclesiastical legislation. With your Lordships' permission I desire to say a few words merely in order to remove that entirely erroneous opinion. The state of the case really is this: that down to the year 1870 a conviction for felony involved forfeiture of the felon's property, and consequently a clergyman convicted of felony forfeited his benefice. In 1870 the Felony Act which is chap. 23 of the 33 & 34 Vict. was passed abolishing the old forfeiture; but it provided that a person convicted of felony should forfeit public offices which are mentioned in the Schedule. Amongst others an ecclesiastical benefice is forfeited *ipso facto* upon a conviction. The section expressly declared that the benefice held by a clergyman convicted of felony should forthwith become vacant, unless the convict received a free pardon within two months of his conviction, and before the living had been filled up. It was further provided that a clergyman so convicted should remain incapable of holding an ecclesiastical benefice afterwards. The present Act repeals the earlier Act, but it re-enacts the provisions as to forfeiture in the cases specified. What it does is simply to extend them to certain very grave and gross misdemeanours, of so bad a character that the person convicted is sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour. Now, hard labour can only be given for certain classes of offences defined by Statute, and cannot be given for any trivial offence upon indictment. Then the Bill contains a similar provision in reference to any clergyman upon whom a bastardy order has been made, or who has been found guilty in the Divorce Court of adultery. It will only carry out the general conviction and belief that a man who has incurred either of those consequences is not a fit person to go on holding a benefice and administering to the spiritual wants of the people. I wish to point out that in other respects the Bill relaxes the stringency of the Act of 1870, because it prevents a conviction from operating until the time mentioned has passed, and then by Clause 16 the incapacity for holding future preferment is not absolute, but is made conditional on the assent of the Bishop of the diocese and Archbishop of the Province being obtained to holding another preferment; that is in cases where a free pardon is not given by the Crown within two months after conviction. The provision in Clause 3 of the Bill by which a conviction in a Temporal Court is made conclusive in the Ecclesiastical Court is little more than re-enacting the existing law; and in some cases Clause 3 relaxes the existing law if it is a summary conviction which cannot be appealed against. With this explanation, trusting that it will remove any misconception upon those points, I beg leave to move the Third Reading of the Bill.

Read 3ª (according to order), and passed, and sent to the Commons.

POLLEN FISHERIES (IRELAND) BILL.

(No. 69.)

Read 3ª (according to order) with the Amendments, and passed, and returned to the Commons.

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.

(No. 62.)

THIRD READING.

Bill read 3ª (according to order).

Verbal Amendments made.

Clause 2.

*LORD MONKSWELL: I have to propose an Amendment after the word "section," to add the words "unless and until the Council shall otherwise direct." The object of this Amendment is——

THE LORD CHANCELLOR: I must point out to the noble Lord that he is not in Order, as he has not given notice of the Amendment.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I understand that to be the Rule which we ordinarily adhere to, and I think it is rather a valuable Rule. It is not, of course, an absolute one, but it is very generally adhered to; and it is rather dangerous that the House should allow it to be broken, to avoid matters being sprung upon us at the last moment.

THE EARL OF CAMPERDOWN: Still, as the discussion upon this Bill was not pursued in the ordinary way in regard to opportunity being afforded of bringing forward Amendments at an earlier stage, and the Bill has been rather rushed through, it appears to me that, as it has not been quite proceeded with in the ordinary course, the Amendment might be allowed now to be brought forward.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: If that is the feeling of the House, I will not oppose its going forward, but I earnestly hope that a Rule will not be readily disregarded which is part of the usage of this House.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I think the only reason that can be urged for it is that which has been pointed out by the noble Lord the Earl of Camperdown, that the Bill was allowed to pass through Committee without Amendments being put in, upon the understanding that they were to be allowed to be brought forward upon this occasion. But I entirely agree with the noble Marquess, and hope that it will not be regarded as a precedent.

*LORD MONKSWELL: Then by the courtesy of the House I shall ask your Lordships to agree to this Amendment which gives the County Councils a somewhat freer hand. The members of the London County Council, I may say, so far as I have been able to consult them, are desirous that these words should be inserted. The Amendment is after the word "section," at the end of line 3, to insert "and unless and until the Council otherwise direct." This Amendment will enable the County Councils, if they like when they appoint a Committee, or at any time afterwards, to say that the appointment of that Committee shall not be held under the section to be an appropriation of the fund. As I have said, it only proposes to give the County Councils a somewhat freer hand, and I hope the noble Lord will not refuse to accept it.

THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: I merely wish to suggest that the Committee act at the pleasure of the Council, and that it is entirely open to the Council to cancel the Committee altogether. If so, the words are certainly not required. I hold that the Council has full power over the Committee to deal with it they please. If I am wrong I daresay I shall be corrected by noble Lords who are well aware of the construction of the Act, but that is certainly my impression—that they may revoke the appointment of the Committee.

*LORD LINGEN: I beg to point out that the words can, at all events, do no harm. I think the Councils ought certainly to have a freer hand.

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: The worst of it is that the Judges, when words are put in merely because they can do no harm, will imagine that they have been put in for some reason, and then they endeavour to find the reason, which is often very unfortunate.

*LORD LINGEN: The words would, I think, remove any ambiguity.

*LORD HOBHOUSE: I think I can point out how the words will do good. Suppose a case in which a Council have referred it to a Committee to advise whether part of the fund, or the whole of it, shall be applied for the purposes of technical education or not, and to inquire and report upon the question. That, I may say, is in point of fact an actual case; a reference of that kind having been made by the London County Council to a Committee. As this clause stands, as I ventured to point out yesterday, such a reference as that would make the first part of Section 2 attach upon the fund, and the reference to a Committee in those terms will be taken as an appropriation until the Committee shall have made their Report, and the Council shall have arrived at a decision, or the Committee shall have been superseded. That puts the Council to make a fresh order, perhaps to supersede altogether the Committee, whom they want to be advised by, in order to prevent that operating as an appropriation which they never intended should operate as an appropriation. But if the words proposed by Lord Monkswell were put in, then the Councils will have it in their power to say—"We desire to make this general reference to a Committee, but we do not desire that that general reference shall act as an appropriation, but the question of appropriation shall be reserved," as I humbly think it ought to be, until the Committee have reported and the Council have considered that Report. That would be the effect of it.

LORD HENNIKER: If the Amendment which is proposed by my noble Friend opposite to-day is passed with regard to rescinding the appointment of a Committee, it appears to me this Amendment is almost surplusage, and personally I think it is rather a mistake to make Acts of Parliament, one may say, almost too explanatory in some ways. But if noble Lords opposite wish that this Amendment should be inserted, I have no objection to offer on the part of the Government.

LORD HERSCHELL: As I understand the matter, it acts in this way. Practically all that my noble Friend desires could be done under the Bill as it now stands; but it would involve this: that if the Council wanted this money not to be hung up for this purpose, and at the same time desired that there should be a reference to a Committee notwithstanding that, for the purpose of considering the question of the application of the money to technical education, it could be carried out under the Bill only in this way: that they could rescind the appointment of the Committee, which would set free the money, and then I apprehend they might re-appoint the Committee upon terms which would prevent the money being in that way held in suspense. This proposal of the noble Lord would—and I understand that to be the object of it—do away with the necessity of rescinding the appointment of the Committee, because it would enable them to expedite the appointment, and to say, "We do not want in these particular cases that the fund shall be tied up." It would give the necessary power to the Council, though it might be worked out in another way.

THE EARL OF MORLEY: But is it not rather absurd to refer the question of appropriating the whole or any part of the money to a Committee, and yet not to take care to tie the money up while the Committee is deliberating?

LORD HENNIKER: As I said before, I can only say that I think the words are surplusage, but, if your Lordships wish, I do not object to their being put in. The other point would be this: that if you rescind the appointment of the Committee by the Council which has had these funds left in their hands, the money which is given to them would fall into the general fund.

LORD HERSCHELL: I am not quite sure that I have not made a mistake, if the House will indulge me for a moment. I am not quite sure that if they did rescind the appointment of the Committee, they could re-appoint the Committee without hanging up the funds. Therefore, I think that the words are necessary, if you want to enable the Council to appoint a Committee to consider the appropriation without unnecessarily hanging up the funds.

*LORD BASING: I apprehend this provision may be necessary as far as London is concerned, which, of course, is a peculiar case, involving special circumstances, though, as far as the rest of the country is concerned, it might be rather inconvenient. But what I apprehend is this: supposing the Committee to have made its Report, the whole thing will be done; whereas, as I understand, the question referred to the Committee regarding technical education will be the subject of a series of Reports, and until they have furnished such Reports, and the County Council has determined the matter, it is not intended that the money should be merged; but I apprehend the object is to make the Council responsible for merging the money whenever they think the time has arrived for so doing.

Amendment moved, in Clause 2, line 3, after the word "section," at the end of the line, to insert the words "and unless and until the Council otherwise direct."—(*Lord Monkswell.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Verbal Amendments agreed to.

*LORD LINGEN: I hope your Lordships will excuse me, at this late stage of the proceedings upon this Bill, for saying a few words more in regard to a clause of it which I cannot help thinking is of great importance. On the Second Reading it so happened that no opportunity was taken of discussing this Bill on its general merits as a public measure, and this is, indeed, the only occasion upon which I shall be able to make some few statements that seem to me to be deserving of your Lordships' attention. I have had, I may say, considerable experience in dealing with matters of this kind, and therefore I hope your Lordships will bear with me upon this occasion. In reference to the 2nd sub-section of Section 1, I scarcely think that urgency can be pleaded. That sub-section raises questions of very great importance, which require, I think, for their full elucidation more time than we have had at present afforded us for the consideration of the subject. The Amendment which has been made to that clause provides that the words which occur in the Technical Education Act, 1889, shall be modified in their application under the provisions of the present Bill. The words in the Act of 1889 are to the effect that the Councils shall be bound in distributing the amount of provision to be made, to do so exclusively in proportion to the nature and amount of efficient technical or manual instruction supplied by the schools or institutions. The Amendment that is proposed to that clause, in the present Bill, is that they shall *not* be so bound; and how very effective an Amendment the insertion of that monosyllable will constitute, your Lordships will readily be convinced. I would point out to the House that, in the first place, the Act of 1889 is a rating Act. Under that Act the ratepayers, if they determined to promote technical education, must rate themselves. If, therefore, any precaution under that Act was needed to be taken, surely some precaution is not less needed under an Act which is not one of rating, but of making public grants. Now, I have been familiar with the system of making public grants for considerably more than 40 years; and I can state to your Lordships from my own knowledge that the principle adopted by successive Governments in making such grants as these has been that a certain modicum of efficiency should be secured before grants are made at all. Such grants have been emphatically grants made for improvement. I do not think that, under this Bill, which so far conforms to the policy of past times, that it is a Bill of grants and not a Bill of rates, the conditions should be made more easy than the Rating Act of 1889. That, I think, is a point to which attention should have been directed; and though I am aware that my observations can bear no practical fruit at this time, yet I have thought it desirable to make them to your Lordships.

Bill passed, and returned to the Commons.

House adjourned during pleasure.

House resumed.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN BILL [H.L.]
(No. 31.)

Returned from the Commons agreed to, with amendments: The said amendments considered (on motion), and agreed to.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 70.)

Returned from the Commons, with several of the amendments made by the Lords agreed to; several amendments agreed to, with amendments; and several other amendments disagreed to, with reasons for such disagreement: The said amendments and reasons to be printed; and to be taken into consideration on Monday next. (No. 78.)

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL.
(No. 62.)

Returned from the Commons with the amendments agreed to.

House adjourned at ten minutes past Seven o'clock, to Monday next, a quarter past Four o'clock.

Lord Lingen

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Friday, 20th March, 1891.

The House met at Two of the clock.

PRIVATE BUSINESS.

LONDON WATER COMMISSION BILL.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That it be an Instruction to the Committee on the London Water Commission Bill that they have power to inquire into all matters connected with the nature, price, management, sources, and sufficiency of the water supply of London and its suburbs, and to insert in the Bill such provisions in connection therewith as in their judgment are expedient."—(*Mr. Ritchie.*)

*(2.13.) MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): Before this Resolution is put to the House I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman if he will add a further Instruction to the effect that the first matter to be inquired into shall be the Metropolitan Water Companies Charges Bill, which has been referred to the same Committee, the principle of which was accepted by the House, and which will be admitted, I think, to be the most pressing question the Committee will be called upon to inquire into? The Instruction proposed by the right hon. Gentleman, in which I cordially approve, is a most important one, but there are other questions even more pressing, especially when we have regard to the fact that the quinquennial re-valuation is to come into operation on the 6th of April, and that it may affect the ratepayers to the extent of £40,000 a year. I do not at present propose to move an Instruction as an addition to the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman, but I hope he will see his way to accept my suggestion voluntarily.

*(2.15.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The hon. Gentleman says that the House accepted the principle of the Water Charges Bill. Now, it is quite true that the Bill was read a second time, but the House did not commit itself to the principle of the measure; it simply said that it should go before the Committee. The hon. Gentleman asks that this Bill shall

be the first inquired into, and his reason is that the re-valuation is to come into operation on the 6th of April. It is perfectly certain, however, that if the inquiry the hon. Member desires takes place first, no Bill based upon it can become law in time to prevent the re-valuation from coming into force. I acknowledge that all of these matters are of the utmost importance, but I think they must be left to the consideration of the Committee itself. I am, therefore, afraid that I cannot assent to the suggestion the hon. Member has made, nor do I think that any additional Instruction can be proposed without notice.

*(2.17.) SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): The right hon. Gentleman is always so courteous that it is difficult to make a complaint in regard to anything he deems right to do, but I think we ought to have had some longer notice of the Instruction he has moved. It only appeared on the Paper to-day, and in a matter of such great importance I think we were entitled to a longer notice, so that we might have been able to consider the terms of the Instruction. As regards the suggestion of the hon. Member for West Southwark (Mr. Causton) I can quite understand the objection to making it an Instruction to the Committee, but it is obvious that it is a matter which presses for immediate decision, if anything effectual is to be done. I trust I may be allowed to express a hope that the Committee will take that part of the inquiry into consideration at an early stage of their proceedings.

(2.19.) MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): It is quite true that the Committee cannot Report before the 6th of April, but if this question were submitted to them specially I think it would produce a great moral effect. As the right hon. Baronet has pointed out, this Instruction comes upon us with some degree of surprise, and I would suggest that the Resolution should be withdrawn for the present and brought up on a later day.

*(2.20.) MR. RITCHIE: The Instruction appeared on the Paper yesterday, and it appears to embrace everything that can be submitted to the Committee for inquiry. The water supply depends to a large extent upon the sufficiency of the works, and I have no doubt that the inquiry for which the hon. Member for Southwark asks, will come within the terms of the notice.

*(2.21.) MR. CAUSTON: As a point of order, may I ask whether it is competent for me to put down a further Instruction to the Committee at the time of Private Business?

*MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

Question put, and agreed to.

QUESTIONS.

SAVINGS BANKS CLERKS.

EARL COMPTON (York, W.R., Barnsley): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether there are any candidates, who have passed the Second Division examination, waiting for appointments to the Post Office Savings Banks; and, if so, whether he can state whether temporary clerks who have not passed any Civil Service examination are being employed in the Post Office Savings Banks during ordinary official hours, while duly qualified clerks are waiting for appointment?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): There are a certain number of Second Division clerks who have not yet been assigned by the Civil Service Commissioners to public Departments, but not more than enough to meet the probable vacancies before the next examination is held. Fifteen temporary clerks are being employed at the Savings Bank.

SALE OF OPIUM IN BURMA.

MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India when the authorities in Burma set aside the regulation dated from Mandalay, 19th March, 1886, stating that "no shops whatever will be licensed for the sale of opium?"

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I have been requested by my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary for India to answer this question. The Order quoted in the question from the Commissioners' Instruction in March, 1886, was modified in 1888 for reasons, and under restrictions, described in the Parliamentary Return No. 338 of the 9th August, 1888.

INDIAN COUNCILS BILL.

MR. KEAY (Elgin and Nairn): Will the First Lord of the Treasury kindly say when the Indian Councils Bill will be taken?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I am not in a position at present to say when it will be taken.

ARMY SERVICE OFFICE CORPS.

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the two colonelcies now vacant in the Army Service Office Corps are to be filled up by promotion in the ordinary way; and, if not, why this is not to be done?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Certain proposals affecting promotion in the Army Service Corps have for some time been under the consideration of the Treasury. The answer to this question depends on the decision which may be come to.

COLONIAL INSCRIBED STOCK.

MR. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to proceed with the draft Bill prepared by the Departmental Committee appointed in 1889 on the subject of the Investment of Trust Funds in Colonial Inscribed Stock?

*THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): My hon. Friend knows the amount of legislation with which the Government have to contend during the present Session. I do not exclude the idea of proceeding with a Bill on the subject of the Investment of Trust Funds in Colonial Stock, but I am unable to give any definite pledge upon the subject.

THE SHERIFF SUBSTITUTE OF SUTHERLAND.

MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether his attention has been called to the fact that Mr. Mackenzie, Sheriff Substitute of Sutherland, is an *ex officio* member of the County Council of Sutherland, and regularly attends its meetings and takes part in its business and deliberations; whether it is the case that in his judicial capacity he is liable to be called upon to give judgment upon matters to which, in his capacity of County Councillor, he is himself a party; whether, as a matter of fact, he has already so adjudicated; and whether he will call upon Mr. Mackenzie to resign one or other of two offices so incompatible?

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): Parliament determined that among others the Chairman of County Road Trustees should sit *ex officio* on the first elected County Councils, and in this capacity Mr. Mackenzie acts in the County of Sutherland. It is quite possible he might be called upon to adjudicate upon matters as to which, as a County Councillor, he is in a certain sense a party; but even if he was not a member of the County Council, he would still, as a ratepayer, be in a certain sense a party to actions in which the County Council was interested. I am not aware if he has already so adjudicated, but I see no cause for interference, his position being precisely the same as before the passing of the Local Government Act, when he, in common with other Sheriff substitutes, was entitled to sit *ex-officio* as a Commissioner of Supply.

MAIL SERVICE TO SHETLAND.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to the recommendations relating to Shetland and the Mail Service thereto, contained in the recent Report to the Secretary of State for Scotland made by the Western Highlands and Islands Commissioners, and in particular to the following suggestions therein made, namely, that Her Majesty's Government should grant a guarantee of 2½ per cent. for four years on the capital required to enable the Highland Railway Company to extend their line to Gills Bay; that there should be a mail service to Shetland at least thrice a week in winter and four times a week in summer; that additional lights should be placed on certain dangerous points of the coast of the Shetland Isles; whether he has received a Memorial from the Lord Provost, Magistrates, and Town Council of Aberdeen in support of these recommendations; and whether he can hold out a hope that the Treasury will be willing to take steps to give effect to the above recommendations or to some, and which of them?

MR. GOSCHEN: Yes, Sir; the attention of Her Majesty's Government has been called to the recommendations made in the Second Report of the Western Highlands and Islands Commission. We have discussed most of the points raised in the question of my hon. Friend, and certainly I can hold out a hope that the Government will be able to give effect to some of the recommendations of the Commission.

INSPECTOR GENERAL OF BANKRUPTCY.

MR. KELLY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that the following advertisement, which appeared in the *Times* of 3rd January last, had reference to a post in the office of the Inspector General of Bankruptcy:—

> "To Accountants.—Wanted an experienced accountant, with knowledge of Company and Bankruptcy Liquidation. Salary from £200 to £300 per annum;"

and whether such a system of bringing persons into the Civil Service, without any examination being held or inquiries made by the Civil Service Commissioners, is contrary to the principles of open competition established by Order in Council of June, 1870, and also to the recommendations contained in paragraph 46 of the Second Report of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, which was adopted by the Treasury in paragraph 36 of the Treasury Minute of 10th August, 1889, whereby it is provided that such staff posts as those of accountantships shall be reserved for the best clerks of the Second Division?

MR. JACKSON: I am not aware of any such advertisement as that referred to. Persons engaged by the Inspector General of Bankruptcy are employed and paid by him out of a lump sum supplied to him for the expenses of his office. They are not in the Civil Service.

MR. KELLY: Will the right hon. Gentleman inquire?

MR. JACKSON: No, Sir; I do not think it is part of my duty to inquire.

BRITISH VESSELS AND CHILI.

SIR T. SUTHERLAND (Greenock): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs if he is aware that British vessels, and notably a ship named the *Cape Breton*, have been prevented by the Chilian Government from leaving Valparaiso for another port in Chili, for the purpose of loading a nitrate cargo; and if Her Majesty's Government will cause inquiries to be made in reference to this matter, with a view to prevent British vessels from being subjected to unwarrantable interference in pursuit of their trade?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: A telegram was received two days ago from Her Majesty's Minister at Santiago, stating that the Chilian Government now refuse clearances to vessels for ports north of Chamaral. Her Majesty's Government do not consider that they can interfere with the discretion of the Chilian Authorities in regard to this matter. They have not heard of any attempt to prevent vessels by force from leaving Valparaiso for other ports in Chili, and they cannot doubt that such action, if known to Her Majesty's Legation, or to the British Admiral, would have been reported.

ACCIDENT AT THE GARTSHERRIE IRONWORKS.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to an accident involving the loss of three lives and the serious burning of a number of men, which occurred at Gartsherrie Ironworks, on Tuesday night; whether he has yet come to any decision as to instituting a special public inquiry into the two fatal and mysterious explosions in ironworks in Glasgow, to which his attention was last week called by Questions; and whether he will include the Gartsherrie accident in the scope of the inquiry?

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fatal accident at Gartsherrie Ironworks; and whether he will order a special inquiry into the cause of it?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): The Secretary of State's attention has been called to the accident at the Gartsherrie Iron Works, and he is now in communication with the Secretary for Scotland with regard to the question, whether a special inquiry shall be held into all or any of these accidents.

FISH CURING ON THE ISLAND OF BARRA.

MR. KEAY: The following question stands on the Paper in my name:—To ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that Messrs. W. Anderson, George Smith, James Flett and Sons, Murdo Morrison, and others, fish curers, who hold portions of waste and uncultivated land within 100 yards of high-water mark on the foreshore at Castlebay, Island of Barra, under ten years' leases, and have built thereon sea walls, curing stations, and landing stages at great cost, have received from the agent of the landowner notice to quit on 1st May next, no compensation being offered for the disturbance or for the large outlay which they have incurred; whether he is aware that the sole reason for serving the notices is that these persons, while duly tendering the rent of their stations, have refused to pay the fees charged in their leases for net drying done by the fishermen, which fees the lessees had agreed to collect from the fishermen, but which, since signing the leases, they have discovered constitute an illegal demand on the fishermen, which, if made, would subject them to heavy penalties; and whether it is in accordance with the Law of Scotland that a landowner can terminate a ten years' lease at two months' notice under the circumstances stated, without any compensation to the lessees for disturbance and for the loss of all their outlay? I wish to say that the question has been put down on the Paper by mistake. I had intended to put it down for a later date, and will therefore defer it.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: I think the hon. Gentleman had better put it down for some day after Easter.

Mr. Crawford

THE ORDNANCE SURVEY.

MR. C. DYKE ACLAND (Cornwall, Launceston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is the fact that certain parts of the 6in. Ordnance Survey, with contour lines, are ready, but are being withheld until the first edition (which, having no contour lines is incomplete) has been sold out; and as the delay so caused may be prolonged indefinitely, whether he will direct the complete edition, which is much desired, to be issued for sale forthwith?

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): It is not the case that certain parts of the 6in. Ordnance Survey with contour lines are ready, but are being withheld until the first edition has been sold out. The publication of the second edition of the 6in. map with contours is gradually proceeding, without reference to the fact whether the first edition has been sold out or not. But, owing to the pressure of work in the Ordnance Survey Department, it will be some time, I am afraid, before the publication can be completed.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

SIR J. POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Bill which was introduced in the House of Lords by the Government respecting the Colony of Newfoundland has been communicated to the Government of Newfoundland for their observation?

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): Before the question is answered I desire to put one to the First Lord of the Treasury upon the same subject. I have received the following cable message from the Speaker of the House of Assembly and the President of the Legislative Council:—

> "To Staveley Hill, Commons, London.
>
> "We are directed to transmit to you the following Resolutions unanimously adopted by both branches of the Legislature of this colony:—'Resolved,—That the Newfoundland Legislature have had under consideration the despatches from Her Majesty's Government relative to the French Treaties question, and especially the despatches in which it is intimated that Imperial coercive legislation relative to this colony would be introduced. Resolved,—That the Legislature humbly and earnestly pray that the House of Commons

will be graciously pleased to take the necessary steps to delay the legislation referred to, so as to enable the Legislature of this colony to present their views before the British House of Commons, which they will do at the earliest possible moment.' You are respectfully solicited by the Legislature of Newfoundland to urge that the request made be acquiesced in.

"EDWARD D. SHEA, President, Legislative Council, and

"GEORGE H. EMERSON, Speaker, House of Assembly, Newfoundland."

I wish to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is prepared to acquiesce in that request?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The question is one of such grave importance that I am sure the House will not expect me to give a hasty answer to it. I have not had an opportunity of conferring with my Colleagues on the question. The telegram only reached us this morning, and I must take time before replying to it. The question comes from a Legislature which is entitled to the utmost consideration, and if the question is repeated on Monday I shall be able to give an answer.

SIR J. FERGUSSON: In the unavoidable absence of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies I will answer the question of the hon. Member for Kilkenny (Sir J. P. Hennessy). The draft of this Bill has not yet been communicated to the Government of Newfoundland. They were requested in November to procure the necessary legislation for empowering Her Majesty's officers to carry out the Treaties with France, and the present Bill is proposed in consequence of their declining to do so, as will be seen by reference to Parliamentary Paper C. 6275, p. 62.

THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE.

MR. DARLING (Deptford): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether it is in contemplation to re-establish sittings for the trial of causes at the Guildhall or elsewhere in Middlesex than at the Royal Courts of Justice; and whether the accommodation at the Royal Courts is insufficient for the Judges of the Queen's Bench Division in the matter of Courts for the trial of causes with a jury?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I am informed that there have been communications between the Lord Chancellor, the Lord Chief Justice, and the Corporation of London with reference to the possibility of holding two Courts for Special Juries in the London List at the Guildhall at the commencement of each sittings, when the Courts are insufficient to accommodate all the Judges of the Queen's Bench Division available for work. It is the fact that the existing accommodation is not sufficient when all the Judges of the Queen's Bench Division are so available.

MR. DARLING: Arising out of that answer, may I ask if it is proposed to provide sufficient accommodation in the Royal Courts?

SIR R. WEBSTER: That is not a question for me to determine, but ought to be addressed to the First Commissioner of Works. That the accommodation in the Courts is insufficient is a fact very well known.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what steps the Government have taken to carry out the Resolution of the House of Commons, adopted on 13th February, relating to Government contracts?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I have conferred with my Colleagues at the head of the several Departments with whom the responsibility of making contracts rests, and it is arranged that they will take such steps as are practicable to give effect to the Resolution of the House in entering into any contracts for works.

SUNDAY OPENING OF MUSEUMS.

MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, after the refusal of the Lords of the Treasury and the Lord President of the Council, he received the deputation from the Lord's Day Society in his official capacity?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I did receive the deputation in my official capacity, and I should have been equally willing to receive a deputation from the society represented by the hon. Member had a little longer notice been given me.

In answer to a further question,

*MR. W. H. SMITH said: The Government adhere to the attitude taken up on a former occasion, and will oppose the Resolution.

KINCARSLEGH PIER.

Mr. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury if the Memorials frequently presented to the Irish Government for a pier at Kincarslegh, County Donegal, have resulted in the grant of £3,000 for its construction?

Mr. JACKSON: I have no knowledge of the Memorials referred to, or of any grant having been made.

THE LABOUR COMMISSION.

Mr. STUART RENDEL (Montgomeryshire): I wish to put a question to the First Lord of the Treasury, of which I have given him private notice, namely, whether he will be able to tell the Welsh Members before the Easter Recess that the Government are prepared to give a favourable consideration to the claim of Wales to representation on the Labour Commission?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I believe that it will be in my power to satisfy the hon. Gentleman before the Easter Recess.

PUBLIC HEALTH (LONDON) BILLS.

Mr. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar): I wish to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Government will not postpone the Second Reading of the Public Health (London) Law Amendment Bill and the Public Health (London) Law Consolidation Bill, so as to enable the Local Authorities to consider the measures?

*The PRESIDENT of the LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. Ritchie, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): The Second Reading will, if possible, be taken today. I understand there is no difference of opinion among the Vestries as to the necessity for amending and consolidating the Law regarding Public Health in London, and that objection is likely to be raised only against certain clauses in the Bills.

*Mr. BARTLEY: Many of the Local Authorities are desirous of considering them before they are read a second time.

*Mr. RITCHIE: I understand that the objections entertained by Local Authorities are such as can be most properly considered in Committee.

TEXTILE TRADES (HOURS AND WAGES OF HALF-TIMERS).

Address—

"That the information in the Return relative to Textile Trades (Hours and Wages of Half-Timers), Addressed for upon the 13th day of this instant March, be extended to include similar information as to the County of Chester."—(*Mr. Bromley Davenport.*)

MOTIONS.

ANCIENT MONUMENTS PROTECTION ACT (1882) AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Lubbock, Bill to amend "The Ancient Monuments Protection Act, 1882," ordered to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Howorth, Mr. Osborne Morgan, Mr. Webb, and Mr. Stanley Leighton.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 254.]

PHARMACY ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

On Motion of Sir Henry Roscoe, Bill to amend the Pharmacy Acts, ordered to be brought in by Sir Henry Roscoe, Dr. Farquharson, Sir Trevor Lawrence, Sir Guyer Hunter, and Mr. King.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 255.]

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (WATER SUPPLY, &c.) BILL.

On Motion of Sir John Lubbock, Bill to confer powers upon the London County Council with respect to the supply of Water, ordered to be brought in by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Howard Vincent, and Mr. Lawson.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 256.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 251.)

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [19th March], "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the Amendment, as amended," and which Amendment was—

Clause B.—(Lands occupied rent free, &c.

"(B.) Where a receiver appointed under this Act of the rents and profits of any lands satisfies the county court that the lands are let on such terms as not to reserve a rent sufficient to enable the receiver to recover from the owner thereof the sum ordered to be recovered, the court, after such service on the owner and occupier of the lands as may be prescribed, and after hearing such owner and occupier if they appear and desire to be heard, may direct that the order for such recovery shall be executed as if the occupier were the owner of the lands: Provided that any such occupier shall be entitled in addition to any other remedy, unless he would have been liable to pay the tithe rent-charge under any contract made before the passing of this Act, to deduct from any sums at any time becoming due from him to the landlord under whom he holds, any amount which shall have been recovered from him under this section in respect of tithe rent-charge or costs, with interest thereon at the rate of four per centum per annum: Provided further that such occupier shall be entitled to recover from such landlord by action at law any such amount which shall have been recovered from him under this section as aforesaid as money paid on the account of such landlord."

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

*(3.55.) MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): Amendments were moved in Clause B to confine the operation of the clause to cases of collusion, and to limit the operation of the clause to contracts which might be entered into after the passing of the Act. The Government declined to accept those Amendments, and the question is, whether we are to agree to the novel principle introduced by the House of Lords. Considering the manner in which the clause was incorporated, and the short time allowed for discussing it, I think it would be well for the Government to give a further explanation as to the course they intend to pursue. There was a general consensus of opinion last night that the clause is objectionable; and I want to know whether the Government intend to adhere to it, or to take, in regard to it, the same attitude of compromise which they have taken in regard to other Amendments? We have always been of opinion that the cardinal principle of the Bill was that the tithe should be paid by the owner. By this new clause the principle is evaded. It introduces quite a novel principle into the Bill by throwing the responsibility of the tithe back upon the occupier. In certain cases, where land is let at a very low rent, or at no rent, the receiver appointed by the County Court will, under this clause, be able to recover from the occupier, thus placing the occupier in the position of one who has backed the landlord's bill. If there is collusion, the landlord ought to be alone responsible; and if there is no collusion, the effect of the Amendment will be to interfere with the relations between landlord and tenant, and to largely impede the application of capital to industry. Under these circumstances, before proceeding further with the clause, I think we are entitled to have a clear explanation from the Government as to the course they intend to pursue.

(3.0.) MR. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I beg to move that the House do disagree with the clause as amended.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member cannot do that. He must vote against the clause.

MR. C. W. GRAY: I hope the House will not agree with the clause. My reasons are these. We have always understood that the cardinal principle of the Bill was that the tithe rent-charge should be recoverable from the landlord, and the landlord only. In accepting this clause from the House of Lords we should be departing from that principle. I admit that the point raised in the clause is a fair one to raise. I think that the interests of the tithowner ought in some way to be protected; no one wishes to defraud him of his legal right. But this clause reverts to a principle which all have condemned, namely, the power of distraint on the tenant-farmer's property. That principle is objectionable, and I hope the House will refuse to listen to any proposal of that sort whatever. I know that there is a difficulty in the matter, but it has not arisen from any fault on the part of those who take an interest in the tithe payers' position. The difficulty has arisen from the drafting of the Bill as it is proposed to amend it by those who take a special interest in the tithe-owner. There may be collusion between a landlord and tenant to so reduce the rent as to escape the tithe; and there may be a perfectly genuine and business arrangement for the payment of a merely nominal rent in consideration of money spent by the tenant on buildings and improvements. Certainly it is not fair in either case that the titheowner should be deprived of his tithe. As the landlords will object to be rendered personally liable for the insufficiency of the rent to pay the tithe, the only way out of the difficulty is to send the Amendment back to the House of Lords to be re-drawn. I would suggest that in the cases provided for under the clause—and there will not be very many of them—the titheowner should allow the tithe which has been sanctioned by the County Court to remain as a debt owing from the landlord until such time as the rent should be sufficient to meet the debt. I would not object if this debt were allowed to carry with it interest, so as to recompense the tithe owner for the delay in receiving his money. Under these circumstances, I do not believe that any landlord would long allow the debt to be outstanding. The only way to settle such a vexed question is in a spirit of compromise—a spirit which, I regret to say, has not yet been shown by the representatives of the Church party. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have an opportunity. They possess immense wealth. [Viscount CRANBORNE (Darwen) dissented]. My noble Friend shakes his head. He knows more about the property in the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners than I do, but I have always understood that it is very large, and that it is likely to become more and more valuable as the ground rents fall in. I am sure it is quite large enough to cover the point I wish to raise, namely, that if any case of extreme hardship were occasioned by the non-payment of the tithe at the moment they might advance the money which was outstanding, accepting the legal debt as security. I hope the Government will consider favourably this suggestion, as they must be convinced that the Amendment as it comes from the Lords is most unsatisfactory. Practically every speech which has been delivered has been in opposition to the Amendment. Under no circumstances would I consent to again throwing the responsibility of the tithe upon the tenant farmer. I believe that a business arrangement may be entered into by which the tithe owner will obtain his tithe without the tenant farmer having to pay it.

(3.10.) SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I rise to support the appeal of the hon. Member. There is one point which I am sure has not been fully appreciated, and which, indeed, has only just been brought to my cognisance. The clause as it stands does very much more than the Government ever intended to do. The Prime Minister has argued that the clause was intended to cover cases of collusion, and it was afterwards declared that it must also embrace those cases where small rents were paid in consideration of sums of money paid down. But, as a matter of fact, the clause affects every case of rack-rent where the tithe is larger

than the rent. Suppose land to be let at a rack-rent of £45 a year without any sum paid or any collusion; and suppose the tithe on that land to be £50. In such a case it is perfectly obvious that under this clause the tenant would have to pay the £50.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): No.

SIR W. HARCOURT: It is perfectly obvious that that is the condition of things which fulfils the wording of this section. Therefore there would be hundreds of tenant-farmers compelled to advance the tithe which ought to be paid by the landlord. No lawyer in this House can controvert this interpretation of the clause; and such an effect is certainly discordant with the declared intentions of the Government. Another consideration is how this clause would operate on Clause 5. The Bill, under that clause, makes provision for reducing the tithe when it exceeds two-thirds of the annual value of the land; but this clause will conflict with and practically overrule that provision, for by it we should come on the tenant and compel him to pay in advance. The Bill professes to relieve the tenant-farmers of England; that has been urged as its great recommendation; but it will have the effect, with monstrous injustice, of making the tenant advance the money which the landlord ought to pay. It has been said that the clause is to apply to beneficial leases, but nine-tenths of those leases are made by ecclesiastical persons or corporations — by the landowners themselves—who would thus throw on the tenants the burdens they themselves ought to bear. A more gross, unfair, I will almost say wicked, injustice can hardly be conceived. Up to a short time since it has been the persistent policy of landowners to shift upon others the burdens they themselves ought to bear. By this Bill the House thought they had got rid of that policy in regard to tithe at least; but now, at the very last moment, the House of Lords makes again an attempt to throw upon the impoverished tenant-farmers of England a burden which the landowners clearly ought to bear. It is impossible to accede to such a proposal. Besides, we have decided that the man who ought to pay the tithe rent-charge is the landowner; then, having done that, why should not the landowner be made to pay directly? Why should we call upon the poor tenant-farmer to advance the money for him, and leave him simply the remedy of recovering by personal action? I am certain the Government will do well to very seriously re-consider this matter; if they do not, the clause will become the "fly in their pot of ointment." It will show the tenant-farmers that the old taint still prevails on the part of the richer classes, of endeavouring to throw burdens which properly belong to them upon the shoulders of other people less able to bear them than themselves. It is plain that the clause is not merely intended to cover cases of collusion, as has been urged. I do not say it would not cover such cases, but it would apply to other cases, such as those of rack-rent and beneficial leases, which are vastly more numerous; and I hardly think the House of Lords when they passed it had any idea that it would have so wide and unjust an application. If the clause was originally meant to apply to only a few particular cases, let it be sent back, though at the last moment, in order that the words may be altered. That, I contend, would be a wise and prudent course for the Government to pursue. The responsibility for the clause, if it remains part of the Bill, will rest with the majority who support it, and I believe the farmers of the country will be likely to call them to account for doing so. I trust the Government will not consent to pass a measure with such a blot upon it. There is no security under this clause that the landlord ever will pay, especially if he be an insolvent landlord; the result will be that the tenant may go on year after year paying sums in excess of his rent with no possible means of recovering the money from the landlord. I would commend that to the consideration of the right hon. Gentleman. He is perfectly aware that there are a great many on this side of the House who feel this injustice very strongly. If the clause is to be carried in its present shape it will be the Representatives of the tenant farmers of England who will be held responsible, and properly held responsible. It is not the persons who sit here and listen to the arguments, who will be held responsible, but the responsibility will rest upon those who, forming the majority, come in and vote without even having listened to the arguments as to what will be the operation of the clause. I protest against it with all the earnestness I can. I feel there is nothing in the past history of tithe, there has been nothing proposed in this Bill, more unjust in its operation than this clause will prove. It will place the onus upon the man who ought not to bear it. It will place the onus upon the man who at the present time is essentially poor. It will make him advance money for the interest of the richer man, his landlord, and it will be in itself a grievance and injustice which will leave behind it a sense of ill-treatment.

*(3.32.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I entirely demur to the view of the right hon. Gentleman as to the object of this clause. It is not the object of the clause to impose liabilities, which ought to rest upon the landlord, upon another person. As has been stated over and over again, it is to prevent the landlord from practically contracting himself out of the liability by agreeing with his tenants on such terms for the occupation of the land as that it shall be impossible for the law to obtain the tithe rent-charge from the rent due to the landlord. As to the effect of the clause, the right hon. Gentleman has discovered what, with all respect to him, I must describe as a mare's nest. He thinks that this clause can be brought into operation in cases where a rack-rent is charged for the land. I demur to that doctrine altogether. The sum ordered to be recovered under the 5th clause of this Bill can never exceed two-thirds of the annual value of the land as assessed to Schedule B of the Income Tax; it therefore never can exceed two-thirds of the rack-rent. So I think it is clear that the clause could not possibly have the operation which the right hon. Gentleman predicts. My hon. Friend the Member for Maldon and the Member for Glamorganshire appear to imagine that the clause will prevent those agreements between the landlord and tenant which are often very useful to agriculture, and under which the landlord lets his land either at no rent or a

low rent for a certain period at the commencement of the tenancy. This clause would in no way prevent such agreements. What will be the future position of the landlord? Precisely what it is now when he undertakes to pay the tithe rent-charge. Landlords who undertake to pay the tithe rent-charge often enter into such agreements now, and will be just as able to do so in future. But supposing the landlord is so dishonest as not to perform his duty of paying the tithe rent-charge, then how can the liability be enforced except by some such clause as this? My hon. Friend the Member for Maldon suggests a plan which would be infinitely more unfair to the tithe owner than the proposal which the House rejected last night. Last night it was suggested that the tithe owner should have a charge upon the interest of the landlord in the land, which charge might be enforced by sale by the tithe owner after the expiration of 12 months. Such a proposal would not meet the case, because it would be difficult to sell such a charge at all, so that the tithe owner would be kept out of his money; and it would be impossible to sell such a charge where the landlord had shirked his liability to pay tithe on more than one occasion, as he might year after year. But my hon. Friend the Member for Maldon now suggests that the tithe-owner should have a charge upon the landlord's interest in the land, which never would be paid, because he provides no machinery whatever for enforcing the payment of that charge. I venture to submit that a more impracticable or impossible proposal for securing tithe to the person who ought to have it, namely, the tithe owner, has hardly ever been suggested to this House. Is any farmer injured by the provisions of this clause? He has, with his eyes open, made an agreement with the landlord, with regard to which he knows that the landlord has not reserved sufficient rent to meet the tithe rent-charge. This clause proposes that the tenant, who has by such an agreement obtained the beneficial interest in the land which the landlord usually reserves to himself, shall be treated as being in possession of the land to the extent of the sum ordered to be recovered for tithe rent-charge, and that recovery shall in the first place be from him. The clause says he shall be recouped for such payment either by keeping back, with interest, money subsequently due from him to the landlord, or, if the latter refuse to pay, by suing him. It is a personal liability on the part of the landlord, not to the tithe owner, but to the tenant. It is by way of fine on the landlord for not performing the covenant which he ought to have performed. The right hon. Gentleman asks why we do not make the landlord directly liable to the tithe owner. I can assure him he is wrong in believing there is any desire on the part of the House of Lords to sustain the rights of the landlords against the rights of the tenant-farmers. I have said over and over again, in public and in private, that we would not impose any personal liability on the tithepayer to the tithe owner, either for tithe rent-charge or for costs. I could not assent, in accordance with what I have already said, to a proposal which would depart from this, and impose upon the landlord personal liability to the tithe owner for tithe rent-charge. The landlord's personal liability is to the tenant, and it is by way of fine upon the landlord for putting the tenant to inconvenience by not performing a duty which he ought to have performed. I believe the effect of this clause will really be to prevent the evil which is contemplated. I believe that if Parliament accepts this clause the result will be that landlords, in cases where the tenants have this exceptional kind of beneficial interest in the land, will perform their duty by paying the tithe, and that, therefore, the hardship upon the tenant, of which the right hon. Gentleman thinks so much, will practically never arise.

(3.44.) SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): Sir, I think the right hon. Gentleman has met my Friend very fairly. It is very important his argument should be met, because I think it really touches a very important part in this clause. We are not dealing with questions of lands which are let, but with the larger and broader question of depressed agriculture, which I am afraid, after the temporary revival, will be still more depressed. Every one knows that in many cases land, on which the tithe has reached as much as 7s. per acre, has gone out of cultivation, and the wise landlord is anxious to get his land into cultivation, even if he has to take a very small rent indeed—frequently below the amount of the tithe rent-charge. Parliament should endeavour to encourage rather than discourage the efforts of those who wish to put the land into cultivation. The right hon. Gentleman thought he had an answer to my right hon. Friend's reference to Clause 5, under which, when the tithe rent-charge exceeds two-thirds of the annual value, it may be diminished. But he failed to meet the argument of my right hon. Friend that before application can be made to reduce the tithe rent-charge the tithe owner comes upon the tenant and takes the full tithe rent-charge from him.

SIR R. WEBSTER: He cannot do that; there must first of all be an order.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: But that order is made before the application.

SIR R. WEBSTER: No.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: The main objection, however, is a more serious one. Clause 5 enacts that where the annual value of the land is ascertained to be under the tithe rent-charge, remission shall be made. I maintain that the value of the tithe under Schedule B of the Income Tax is, in many cases, above the rack-rent, and this point, if established, must seriously invalidate the argument of the right hon. Gentleman opposite. I know a case in which land which used to let some eight or ten years ago for £1,020 is now rented at £699; and yet the value under Schedule B has never been reduced, in spite of annual applications.

SIR R. WEBSTER: It ought to have been.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: Yes; it ought to have been, but it has not. On what ground has it not been reduced? I can understand their saying to the landlord, "You are willing to let your land to a good farmer for so much below the full value; but we think the value is over what the tenant pays, and we shall go on taxing the land at its full value."

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Has there been no appeal?

SIR G. TREVELYAN: There has been no appeal, and, as in many other cases, it was on the ground of the expense that no appeal was made. We know that in other cases appeals have been made again and again, and have failed because the Assessment Authorities would not admit that the land in their district was worth next to nothing. They, therefore, insist on keeping the value at a figure which may represent its future or its past value, but certainly not its present value, or what it will be for a good while to come. Consequently, though the farmers admit that the Bill gives them some relief, they do not admit that that represents the real facts of the case. The right hon. Gentleman says that it is a very simple matter, and that if it is impossible for the tithe owner to recover the tithe from the landowner he must recover it from some quarter. But how is he to get it? We say he ought to get it from the person to whom the tenant pays the rent. "But," says the right hon. Gentleman, "we cannot under this Bill impose personal liability on the landowner." We reply that that is a mere question of words, and that you do by the words you have already accepted, impose personal liability, but you impose that liability on the tenant, whereas it ought to be imposed on the landowner. The landowner ought to bear all the risk and all that is disagreeable; for I put it to the House, how disagreeable must it be for a farmer, cultivating a miserable piece of land, to have to bring an action against his landlord in order to obtain, not for his own benefit, but for that of the tithe owner the amount of tithe rent-charge the landowner is not willing or is possibly unable to pay. The right hon. Gentleman, says "Are the tenant farmers injured by the clause?" I reply that they are, because the Bill makes them responsible for other people's debts. There is no more reason that they should be made responsible for the tithe rent-charge of the landlord, than that they should be made responsible for any of his other debts. The course the Government might have taken is quite plain. They might have accepted the Amendment of the hon. and learned Gentleman below the Gangway which put upon the tithe owners the duty, and gave them the power, of exacting the tithe rent-charge if it were not paid by the landlord. But not having accepted that, I can imagine no better course for them than to allow the House to disagree with the Amendment, and refer it back to the House of Lords in order that they may introduce words that will really carry out the spirit of the Bill, and do justice to the three parties affected by it.

(3.52.) MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): It is my intention to vote with the Government on this question, and for this reason: I think that the operation of this clause will be very small, and that it has been very much misrepresented—though not intentionally—and very much exaggerated by speakers on the other side of the House. I also think that the hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Gray) and his friends have not been quite fair in the description they have given of the Bill. The hon. Member for Maldon has said he looks on the Bill as one founded on compromise, and give and take.

MR. C. W. GRAY: I said I hoped so.

MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL HUGESSEN: Well, the hon. Gentleman said he hoped so, and he also said the Church Party would not gain anything by this measure. I wish to call attention to the primary operation of the first portion of the Bill, which shifts the onus of the tithe from the occupier to the landowner. That is undoubtedly a gift on the part of the landlords' Party, and justifies me in declining to agree with my hon. Friend in saying that it does not contain a fair measure of compromise. It seems to me that the Opposition are not quite fair in the way in which they regard the property of the tithe owners. They seem to look upon the property in tithe as they would not look on any other kind of property. Why, I should like to ask, is the tithe owner to be placed in a worse position than the owner of any other description of property? These are some of the reasons why it appears to me to be absolutely impossible not to adopt some clause of this kind, whereby the tithe owner is placed in a position enabling him to recover what is his due. At the same time, while saying this, I must also say that I do not regard the clause as, on the whole, a very satisfactory one. I cannot help thinking the Government would suffer no great disadvantage if they adopted the suggestion thrown out by my hon. Friend, and gave the House of Lords the opportunity of further considering this clause, together with the other clause with which we have disagreed. I cannot say that I regard the position of the other House in connection with this matter as being altogether very happy. If the clause should be sent back to them, they may be able to devise some really practical settlement of this question which might present itself to them as offering the means of facilitating the passage of the Bill. I shall support the Government if the Question is pressed to a Division, but, at the same time, I hope they will have regard to a request which comes from all parts of the House, and be able to see their way to referring the clause back to the House of Lords.

*(3.58.) MR. J. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade has based his argument against the clause mainly on the provision of Clause 5, whereby a remission is made where the amount of tithe exceeds two-thirds of the value of the land. The right hon. Gentleman doubted whether the rack-rent always represented the value of the land. What I wish to point out is, that it may very often happen that although a remission ought to be granted, the tenant would be unable to obtain the benefit of it in consequence of some default on the part of the landlord. Suppose we take the case of an absentee landlord, against whom tithe is claimed in Court. Judgment in that case would go by default for the entire amount of the tithe, and the tenant on whom it is now sought to impose responsibility would have no opportunity of obtaining the remission allowed under Clause 5. The landlord having neglected to appear, there is no provision that service should be made upon the tenant. In a case of a contract of tenancy made before the passing of the Act, service is compulsory upon the tenant, the tenant may appear, and he may be able to get a remission; but it will be different with contracts entered into after the passing of this Act. I will put a concrete case. Assume a farm on which the tithe amounts to £60 a year; assume that that farm cannot be let at a rack-rent of more than £40; suppose that the landlord is abroad, that proceedings have been taken against him, and he does not appear. What occurs? The tenant is not aware that a possession order has been made, and that the sum of £60 is to be recovered under Section

5; he has no opportunity of appearing before the Court to show that the £60 is more than two-thirds of the value under Schedule B; and, consequently, the full amount of the £60 will be recovered for him. The right hon. Gentleman says the Court, in that case, would not make such an order, but I hold that here the word "may" means "must." Take Clause 2, which changes the mode of recovering the tithe. There simply the word "may" is used—the Court may order the tithe to be recovered for the owner of the land; and, clearly, that means the Court must so order. The Court will be bound to see that the money is paid in full by the tenant, notwithstanding that the amount is in excess of the proper sum. I venture to say, therefore, that unless some further alteration is made in this clause cases may occur in which, owing to some oversight or default on the part of the landlord, the tenant will be obliged to pay more than ought legally to be demanded from him.

(4.5.) CAPTAIN BETHELL (York, E.R., Holderness): I am inclined to agree with the Government that as the Church party have already given up something, as those who represent the landlord say, they cannot consent that a personal liability shall be thrown upon him, and as those who represent the tenant avow that, under no conditions, will they make him primarily responsible for the tithe, the present proposal is the best solution of the difficulty. In the case which we are now discussing, the Church has already given way to some extent, and I do not think any further concession can fairly be expected. I therefore hope the Government will abide by this clause.

*(4.8.) MR. STUART RENDEL (Montgomeryshire): After the hon. and gallant Member has made such a candid confession I think we are justified in the position we have from the first taken up, and to insist that it is the duty of the Government, and not of the occupiers, to find a satisfactory solution of this difficulty. The President of the Board of Trade has already been obliged, by these Amendments of the Lords, to extensively change the methods of his Bill, and now he proposes that any person who wishes to follow the honourable occupation of cultivating the soil shall not be entitled to relief——

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I never said anything of the kind. What I did say was that persons who entered into contracts should take care what bargains they made.

*MR. STUART RENDEL: At any rate it seems to me to be an unusual extension of the common legal maxim *caveat emptor*. The leading principle of this Bill is to make the landowner responsible for the tithe, and that is the solitary title it has to our assent. Yet this clause will violate this principle, and shift the responsibility on the occupier's shoulders in certain circumstances, and although he may have in advance paid his rent, either in cash or by erecting buildings, you will, in the default of the landlord, make that tenant liable also for the tithe which has thus already been paid by him as rent. For I challenge contradiction to the assertion that the rent will, in all these cases, cover the tithe. Thus you are making the occupier responsible for tithe exactly in that particular case where it is a necessity of the case that he has already paid it; and you are exempting the landlord from the liability to tithe, which is the cardinal feature of the Bill, exactly in the very case when it is clear that he has already in his pocket the tithe paid as rent by the tenant. I say that this clause is a naked, bare, and monstrous injustice to be inflicted on the occupier in contravention of the whole principle of the Bill. I hope, therefore, the House will refuse to accept this clause, and send it back to the other place to be drafted in a more satisfactory shape.

(4.14.) MR. ABEL SMITH (Herts, E.): I consider that Clause 5 gives all the protection to the tenant farmer which is necessary. I have for many years served upon an Assessment Committee, and in almost all cases we have fixed the assessment at the rent. Such a case as that quoted by the hon. Member opposite is not likely often to arise. I feel it my duty, therefore, to support this proposal.

*(4.15.) MR. G. OSBORNE MORGAN (Denbighshire, E.): It might have been all right if the Bill had not been made retrospective. I always thought that this clause was the worst clause in the Bill, and every speech I

listen to confirms that opinion. My right hon. Friend the Member for Derby pointed out that the clause would not apply merely to cases of collusion or beneficial leases. Take a farm, the tithe on which is £30, and the rent of which is only £20. It is quite possible that the Assessment Committee might fix the rateable value at £30. The right hon. Gentleman forgets that in this clause the liability is fixed not upon the rent but upon the value as ascertained under the 5th section of the Act. Cases may occur with which, through the mistake or absence of the landlord, the tenant would not be able to get relief under the 5th clause. In that case, no matter what the annual value might be, the excess of tithe would fall on the tenant, and how will he be able to get it back? You are not only imposing a personal liability, which you said you would not do, but you are casting an unmerited slur on landlords and tenants by suggesting that they may be guilty of collusion. Really, this clause, to judge from the Debate which has taken place, has no friend whatever, with the exception of the hon. Member for Shropshire and the noble Lord the Member for Darwen. Of course, if the Government are determined to press it, we must be content with making our protest; but I hope that the tenant farmers of England will, at the next election, remember who it was that introduced this clause, and know, therefrom, what favour they may expect from those who in the past have passed as the "farmer's friends."

(4.21.) MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): It is not necessary for me to say much, as all the arguments which can be used against this proposal have already been advanced. By that I do not mean to suggest that those arguments are in themselves weak. The fact is, we have had no arguments put forward in its favour. I do not wish to infuse any heat into this Debate, although the manifest injustice of the clause would warrant me in doing so. I am satisfied that if those who intend to vote for the clause would listen to the arguments against it, the Government would be defeated. This is not a case where the tithe owner comes in. It is admitted on all sides that the tithe owner must have his tithe. The question is, how is he to get it; in what manner is he to recover it? The question is one simply between the landlord and the tenant. What was the origin of this clause? It comes to us from the House of Lords, and any proposal from that House on a question arising between landlord and tenant ought to be examined with considerable minuteness if we wish to profit from the experience of the past. The President of the Board of Trade, following the example of the Attorney General, said that in making a bargain with his landlord the tenant must take care of himself. But in the making of any such bargain who has the upper hand? If anyone suggests it is the tenant I shall be very much astonished, because we know that the landlord—as we have seen in the case of Ireland—is able to put the screw on the tenant. Now, we want to make that impossible in this case. Let us bear in mind that hereafter the liability for the payment of the tithe is to rest upon the landlord. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, in explaining the object of this Amendment, said it was to prevent the landlord contracting himself out of the liability, and to prevent him entering into an arrangement with the tenant so as to avoid the payment of the tithe. But what is it proposed to do by way of preventing a contract of that kind being entered into? You penalise the tenant. Let me remind the House of the origin of the various Tithes Bills we have had to discuss. The object has been to get rid of the irritation caused by distraining upon the tenant for a debt which is not his. We have protested against this clause on the ground of its injustice. But it may also be opposed on the ground of its futility, and of the danger which may attend its enactment. In 1887 the Prime Minister declared that the weak point in the arrangement of 1836 was the introduction of the occupier into the matter at all, for the debt was the debt of the owner in respect of the produce of the land. In that one sentence the noble Lord showed the fundamental vice of the whole system. And in the particular case with which you are now dealing, you are going to perpetuate that fundamental vice. The effect of doing so has been clearly anticipated by hon. Members below the Gangway opposite, who feel an interest in the tenant farmers.

They foresee that you will increase the irritation which already exists, to some extent, in England, and create fresh difficulties between landlord and tenant. In Wales you will perpetuate the state of things which at present exists. The clause, therefore, is not only unjust, but it is also highly dangerous. We are asked to provide some remedy. It is clear there is need for a remedy which shall not penalise the tenant. But it is the duty of the Government to find a remedy. I may, however, point out that the proposal I made last night would satisfactorily meet the difficulty, and that is, that where the landlord does not fulfil his obligations, a charge shall be created on his interest in the land, the charge to be realised by an order for the sale of the land. Let me put this dilemma to the House. Let me point out what the effect of the possibility of the order of sale will be. I propose that the charge shall not be realised for a reasonable term. I am not tied to a year. I will make it, if you like, two years. But the effect will be this: The landlord will take very great care before he allows the prospect to arise of the possibility of the loss of his property, and he will do something to wipe away the charge on the land. Although it is not for me to propose a remedy, I think this of mine is far better than that proposed by the Government. What does the Government proposal do? It has, at last, landed them in the quagmire in which they find themselves by attaching a personal liability to the landlord. I am not sure that that may not be a way out of the difficulty; but supposing this done, supposing we admit the principle of fixing the personal liability on the landlord—and that is what the Government have done in accepting the Amendment I proposed last night, instead of doing that in the first instance—the Government place the occupier or the tenant in the position of a buffer between the landlord and the tithe owner. Is it not better and easier to say that if there is to be this personal liability at all it shall be direct from the landlord to the tithe owner, instead of making it obligatory for the tithe owner to distrain upon the tenant and then allowing the tenant to sue his landlord? Is that a good thing? Do you view with equanimity the prospect? Does it augur well for the relations between landlord and tenant that you enable the tenant, after he has suffered the irritation of a distraint, to put his landlord in the County Court? We have warned the Government again and again. So far as we are concerned, if we wanted an election cry we could not have a better one than will be supplied if this Amendment is adopted. But, of course, that is not the spirit in which we ought to legislate. It is not a question what is best for us, but what is just and fair towards the interests with which we are dealing. But I warn the Government that not only is their proposal unjust towards the occupier, but they are perpetuating a state of things which will provoke increasing irritation, and Session after Session Tithe Bills will be introduced until we have a much fairer proposal.

(4.35.) MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): I agree with the hon. Member that this proposal will give rise to great irritation. It may be that land is let on an improving lease at a nominal rent, on condition that it is brought into cultivation; and it seems to me, when the tithe owner comes for his tithe, it will be an easy thing for him to prove that the rent of the land is insufficient to pay it. A very low rent may be taken for a few years, say a nominal rent of £5 for a farm of 100 acres; and the farmer may contract to bring the farm into a proper state of cultivation. Under the clause it seems to me the landlord will get free, but the tithe owner will come on the land and distrain.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The owner will pay the tithe.

MR. JEFFREYS: But how will he be made to do this?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: As I have endeavoured to explain, there are, under the law as it now stands, a considerable number of cases in which the owners take upon themselves to pay the tithe rent-charge where they have let the farm on precisely the terms the hon. Member speaks of, and this will be the case in future.

MR. JEFFREYS: If that is the case, that does away with the objection to a great extent; but it will not be always understood in that way, and many will have a very different view of the intention of the clause, and it ought to be made a great deal clearer than it is at present. Then, again, suppose there should be collusion between the landlord and tenant. In that case, although they will both be equally to blame—I hope and believe such a case will never occur—yet if it should occur, then the one to be punished will be the tenant, and that, I confess, seems to me very unfair. I do not, I say, think that such collusion will ever occur; but if it should, then it is unfair that the landlord should get off scot-free, and the tenant be punished. One matter I should like to mention. It was referred to by the right hon. Gentleman opposite (Sir G. Trevelyan). He spoke of the rack-rent being above the assessment; but, in such a case, I think the Assessment Committee in his county must be greatly to blame. Although, no doubt, the assessment is frequently above the nominal rent, yet it never should be above the rack-rent, and in all cases of which I have cognisance, the Committee, on appeal, have taken the view of what is the fair rack-rent in the locality. The clause is drawn in rather a vague manner, and, in attempts to interpret it, there seems to be so much difference of opinion that I think it should be sent back to the House of Lords and made more plain.

(4.39.) MR. HERBERT GARDNER (Essex, Saffron Walden): I congratulate the hon. Member who has just spoken upon the course he is about to pursue, for I hope he will be true to his political record, and vote for putting the responsibility for tithe upon the landlord. We have had some interesting speeches from the other side of the House. Whether they have been interesting to right hon. Gentlemen on the Treasury Bench I do not know. There has been very little support to the clause in those speeches. There was a speech from the hon. Member for Hertford (Mr. A. Smith), who declared, as a Representative of tenant farmers, that they would be content with their position under Clause 5; but I observed he did not give the reasons why they should be content; he simply gave it as his *ipse dixit* that with Clause 5 in it tenant farmers would be satisfied with the Bill. But I doubt if he would go down to his constituents and evoke much

assent to that expression of his opinion. Then we had a speech from the hon. and gallant Member for the Holderness Division, to whom we are always glad to listen. The hon. and gallant Gentleman (Captain Bethell) said very truly that this clause represented an impossible dilemma, a difficulty that could not be solved unless one of the three parties gave way—the Church, the landowners, or the occupiers—and then he proceeded to suggest that the sacrifice should be made by the occupiers only, and this is the solution the Government bring forward.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The occupiers do not pay the tithe rent-charge. The occupiers will pay in the first instance, but ultimately payment falls upon the landowner.

MR. HERBERT GARDNER: With great respect to the right hon. Gentleman, I can out of his own lips show that the clause is unjustified, because in defending the Bill he has taken the ground that its object is to do away with the responsibility of occupier under the Act of 1836. I do not think that it is sufficient explanation to say that a tenant must enter into his contract with his eyes open. The hon. and gallant Gentleman opposite said the problem was almost impossible of solution, and in that contention he takes the view of the Prime Minister, who said, with this Amendment of Lord Selborne before him, that the question was so surrounded with difficulties on every side that no proposal could be entirely satisfactory, and then the noble Lord went on to say that the proposal in the Amendment was somewhat clumsy. So it comes to this: that this unhappy clause which we have rightly been debating so long, this clause which is the result of the wisdom of the House of Lords, led by the acumen of that infallible lawyer, Lord Selborne, has been denounced by the Prime Minister as "clumsy." Then we have had a speech from the hon. Member for Faversham (Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen), and in that speech we may read the expression of the general opinion outside this House. My hon. Friend spoke with two voices: he spoke against the clause, but then he proceeded to say he should vote with the Government as a faithful follower of his Party. Well, if the Government have still any doubt as to the opinion of tenant-farmers, they will have that doubt set at rest at the next election, when tenant-farmers will not have forgotten this clause. The meaning of the clause is really this: that you lay it down as a principle that every landlord shall be bound to find sufficient rent to meet the claim upon him, and the landlords do not so much object to to that; but then you go further, and lay it down that every tenant, on taking a farm, shall be bound to see that he pays sufficient rent to his landlord to meet the claim of the tithe rent-charge. By this Bill you intended that the responsibility should be upon the landlord, but by this clause you do not carry out that intention. If by this clause you really wish to make the landlord responsible you do not do so. Why not bring forward some proposal imposing upon the landlord the direct responsibility? The President of the Board of Trade says the tenant will not pay, and that the payment ultimately falls on the landlord; but why not make the landlord directly responsible? He has been made personally responsible by the acceptance of the Amendment of the hon. Member for Glamorgan. The right hon. Gentlemen contends that this is not a similar case; but with all due respect I must say he is splitting hairs, I might almost say tithes of hairs. It is quite obvious this clause has been introduced in the interest of the tithe owners. Let the Government accept the advice of my hon. Colleague in the representation of Essex (Mr. Gray), and refer back this Amendment to the wisdom of the House of Lords, from which it emanated.

(4.45.) Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I hope the Government will have the courage to cut the knot by withdrawing the clause altogether. From my own experience, I am bound to say I think the clause is most reactionary and retrograde in its tendency, and that it neutralises the best portions of the Bill. My hon. and gallant Friend (Captain Bethell), in defending the clause, put the query, "Where is the money to come from?" I reply, there is no money to come, with land going out of cultivation, and corn at its low price. I do not think the Government will gain much credit from the Church Party by adhering to this proposal, and I would urge them to accept the suggestion tendered by my hon. Friend the Member for Maldon Division.

*(4.46.) Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): As a Representative of an agricultural constituency, I oppose the clause, and support the appeal made by several supporters of the Government to withdraw the clause, and thus end our discussion. I feel bound to offer one or two objections to the clause, which I hope may add somewhat to the force of the reasons urged why the President of the Board of Trade should re-consider the position he has adopted. The clause obviously undoes the main merit of the Bill, which is that it relieves the occupier from the burden of the tithe, but my objection goes further. This clause, in the most effectual way, sets up a Land Court for the tithe owner and for the benefit of the clergy. The hon. Member for Hertfordshire says, on behalf of tenant farmers, that they are contented with Clause 5; but I say they want something beyond that. In the *Daily News*, a day or two ago, there was an important intimation from the hon. Member for Dorsetshire. The hon. Member was examined by the Royal Commission on Redemption of Tithe, and in a very lucid and forcible letter he pointed out that any evidence with regard to revision of the value of the tithe—the burden of tithe—was absolutely excluded from the scope of that Commission. We are, then, in this position: Clause 5 is an inadequate solution of the difficulty agriculture is under, the Commission is not instructed to suggest any remedy in the future for the unfair incidence of tithe, and, now, at the instance of Lord Selborne, the Clerical Party have inserted this provision, which will have the effect of forcing up rents and of imposing a fine upon just those arrangements between landlord and tenant which in the permanent interest of agriculture are essential, and which those who have the interest of agriculture at heart wish to see encouraged to the utmost. In the course of the Debates on the Act of 1836, Sir Robert Peel laid the greatest stress on this point, and urged with force that the Act would put an end to uncertainty in agriculture, and would in the highest degree encourage improvements in the land both by landlords and tenants.

Now it has been pointed out that the rateable value is often above the rent, and I should like to point out that, to a very large extent, the rent is still vastly above the economical value of the land. Sir James Caird, in giving evidence before the Depression of Trade Commission some years ago, referred to one point which bears directly on the point at issue. Whereas, he said, the changes in rent when the land passed into the hands of the landlord and was let again were often to the extent of a re-letting at 50 or 60 per cent. reduction on the previous rental, when the occupying tenant remained, he, rather than leave the land, often accepted a remission of only 10 to 20 per cent. The tenant farmers, then, are in many cases in this position: that the better farmers they are the more they fear to lose the value of the improvements they have made in the land, and because they are reluctant to face the cost of removal from their holdings and do not wish to forfeit the goodwill of the business connections they have formed, these reasons so weigh with them that they pay a rent higher than the economic value of the land. I put these facts before the President of the Board of Trade because I know, although he looks at these things from a different point of view to myself, his sympathies are with the agricultural interest. The effect of the clause will be that there will not be that relief to agriculture which was originally contemplated, while you have tenant farmers in the position in which they are practically compelled by the very fact of their having done their duty by the land to pay a rent above the value, you have the House of Lords in the interest of the Church insisting upon the insertion of a clause which not only upsets the main merit of the Bill, which is the relief of the occupier from the burden which has been thrust upon him, you have this additional evil, that a Court is set up to adjudicate matters and practically turned into an engine to work up rents in favour of the Church and the tithe owner. I hope from the many considerations urged from both sides of the House the Government will see the expediency of performing the happy dispatch on this unhappy clause, and then they will pass a Bill which, though it is not what we want, will not further hamper the industry we wish to encourage.

(4.55.) VISCOUNT CRANBORNE (Lancashire, N.E., Darwen): I am reluctant to rise, but it is assumed that we all join in the objections because we do not rise to reply in defence of the clause. There is a strong feeling among hon. Members on this side that we ought to persist in agreeing with the Lords' Amendment. I am quite conscious how important the matter is; but the real fact is, hon. Members opposite rise so often and prolong their observations to such inordinate length that we get little chance to intervene. The right hon. Gentleman told us that any lawyer would say he is right in his conception of the clause. I do not pretend to be a lawyer, but I have read the clause and the Bill, which I do not know that he has; and as I read it it seems perfectly evident that the rack-rent never could be less than the tithe; for, under the 5th clause, the tithe will never be allowed to be more than two-thirds of the rack-rent. The difficulty we have to deal with was first pointed out by the hon. Member for Glamorgan on a former occasion, and he made a proposal which the Government did not see fit to accept, and I think he himself admitted it would scarcely work. Then the Bill went to another place, and we have the conclusion arrived at there for meeting the difficulty. Now my hon. Friend the Member for Maldon, not satisfied with the proposal, has gone the length of proposing a remedy of his own.

MR. C. W. GRAY: Let me explain. I did not make a proposal with any idea of it being accepted; I only suggested that something in that way might be done.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: But nothing in the way my hon. Friend suggests could be done. This is the point I want to place effectually before the House. My hon. Friend proposes that the debt should remain a charge against the landowner. Now let me take an extreme case to show how impossible it is that his Amendment could meet the difficulty. Suppose a landlord let land to a relative at a nominal rent, a penny a year it may be, and suppose the landowner refuses to pay the tithe rent-charge, under the provisions of this Bill a receiver would be put in and receive the rents and profits of the land;

but the receiver might sit there till the crack of doom and never get the interest upon the debt, which would mount higher and higher, and would become irrecoverable.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Proceedings may be taken within two years.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I am not sure of that. I have good legal authority for saying there is much doubt on the point whether in law he could recover. Another hon. Member said it is a very common practice in England to let land at a nominal rent for one or two years, and maintained that in such cases this clause will act very hardly. Who pays the tithe now? I know the case of property with which I am intimately connected where precisely the same thing was done. The land had got into bad order. The late tenant was bankrupt, and allowed the land to get into a poor condition. The land was let to a new tenant at a nominal rent for the first year, for a little more the second year, and it was not until the fourth year that the full rent was charged. Of course, under the provisions of this Bill, the tithe owner has a remedy against the landlord in the first instance, and if it is shown that the occupier receives benefit from the particular method of letting, which the landowner and the tenant have agreed upon for their own purposes, then the tithe owner loses his money. Surely hon. Members will not say that when the land really produces sufficient to pay the tithe rent-charge the tithe owner should lose his right to tithe simply because of some special arrangement between the landlord and tenant. This matter has been very carefully considered, and of all the proposals made this is found to be the only one which is at all feasible. It is admitted that there is a difficulty to be grappled with, and therefore I earnestly hope the Government will adhere to the clause.

*(5.3.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): Notwithstanding his speech, I think the noble Lord must see that the general opinion on both sides of the House is that this clause ought not to be passed. I cannot conceive why, under the circumstances, the Government stick to the clause unless they think the Church will derive some benefit. The noble Lord appears to represent both the House of Lords and the Church in this matter, and I trust he will see very shortly, if not at once, the wisdom of allowing the President of the Board of Trade to withdraw the clause. The right hon. Gentleman (Sir M. Hicks Beach) stated just now that there are at present cases in which no rent is paid, but in which the landlord pays the tithe himself. If the landlords will pay, why have a clause which will only cause annoyance to the tenants? It appears that neither the Church nor the House of Lords have any faith whatever in the Tory landlords. One would think the landlord had so much love for the Church that he would pay tithe without even being asked for it, but I gather, the Church does not think so. The right hon. Gentleman also told us that the policy of the Government throughout has been that the tithe should not be a personal liability on the landlord. If that is so why does he want to make it a personal liability on the tenant? Furthermore, we have been told that the Church has already given up something. I cannot see what it has given up. I understood this Bill was introduced for the purpose of benefiting the Church, and the Church alone. It will not benefit the tenant and it will not benefit the Tory Party, except so far that they may get a little more support from the Church. But the Church is boasting that it is getting a great deal out of the Bill already, and it would seem to be true since the market price of tithe has risen. My great objection to the clause is that it is opposed to the public policy of the country. The real effect of the clause will not be to get tithe, but to drive land out of cultivation, and no one will say it is to the interest of anybody that land should be driven out of cultivation. Another fact which affects me is, that you are giving to the Church a power that you do not give to any other person. There may be other charges on land. Are you going to give to all the persons who may have charges on land the means of collecting their interest or principal from people who are not concerned in the matter? Suppose an hon. Member opposite owed me money. What would the President of the Board of Trade say if I had the power to recover the money from himself? He would call it robbery. I

trust that even at this, the eleventh hour, the Government will withdraw the clause.

*(5.12.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I have no right to speak again, and I only rise to make an appeal to the House. I hope that as we have now discussed the clause for six hours we may be permitted to come to a conclusion. The rest of the Amendments will not raise any serious matter of controversy, and in that case we should be able to finish the consideration of the Amendments to-day, which, I think, would be felt to be for the general convenience of hon. Members.

(5.13.) MR. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): In the interest of the tithe owner, I should like to point out a flaw in the clause. The tithe owner has to wait for three years before there are arrears. Then he goes to the Court, which has the owner before it. It may be discovered that the owner is not the occupier, whereupon the Court may appoint a receiver. The receiver may come to the Court and inform it that there is not sufficient to satisfy the tithe. Then the Court makes an order that the occupier shall be treated as owner. Why, when the owner is before the Court, cannot the Court ascertain whether there is any collusive arrangement? Why put the poor tithe owner to all this trouble? Surely the wisest course would be for the Government to withdraw the clause and see if they cannot simplify the procedure.

*(5.15.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I venture to ask the House to consider what were the leading principles of the Bill when it was discussed in Committee. The first principle was to take the liability to pay tithe off the occupier and lay it on the landowner; and the second was that the landowner should not be personally liable for the tithe. When the Bill got to the House of Lords, Lord Selborne said that as the personal liability of the landlord had been withdrawn, he could not see his way to ask the House to take off the 5 per cent. reduction, which had been proposed by Her Majesty's Government more than once in previous Bills during this Parliament. The whole spirit of the former Bills was to put a personal liability on the landowner, and, in consideration of that, 5 per cent. was to be taken off the amount of the tithe as commuted. What has happened? The Government have agreed to put a personal liability upon the occupier in the first instance, and eventually on the landowner. The President of the Board of Trade denies that technically, but the distinction is so microscopic that I am unable to see it. To all intents and purposes, the first charge in some instances, is upon the occupier. I think we are entitled to insist that the Bill should be sent back to the House of Lords for more careful consideration. I am a tithe owner, and there are many others in the House. Have we heard any argument from tithe owners, who are mouth-pieces for the Church, in support of this clause? No; all the arguments in favour of the clause have been advanced by the Church Party.

(5.20.) The House divided:—Ayes 174; Noes 117.—(Div. List, No. 99.)

Several Amendments agreed to.

Several Amendments disagreed to.

Several Amendments amended, and agreed to. [Special Entry.]

Committee appointed, "to draw up Reasons to be assigned to the Lords for disagreeing to several of the said Amendments." — Sir Michael Hicks Beach, Mr. Attorney General, Mr. Ritchie, Mr. Mowbray, Mr. Jackson, Mr. William Lowther, and Viscount Cranborne:—To withdraw immediately."

Ordered, That Three be the quorum.

CUSTODY OF CHILDREN BILL [LORDS]. (No. 216.)

As amended, considered; an Amendment made; Bill read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

SAVINGS BANKS BILL.—(No. 220.)

COMMITTEE.

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

(5.41.) MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to propose the verbal Amendment which stands in my name.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 9, after "of," insert "a trustee."—(*Mr. G. Howell.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I understand that the Amendment is not necessary.

Question put, and negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 2.

*(5.43.) MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): The Amendment that stands next on the Paper in my name raises an important point. The present scheme of the Bill is for the House to appoint a Committee, which Committee shall appoint a Committee of Inspection. I think it is just as well that the House should itself appoint the Committee of Inspection and insert the names of the members of that Committee in the Bill. My Amendment is that the names mentioned in the Schedule shall be the Committee of Inspection.

Amendment proposed, in page 1, line 19, after "shall," insert "be the Inspection Committee and."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(5.44.) THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Mr. GOSCHEN, St. George's, Hanover Square): I hope my hon. Friend will not press this Amendment. My hon. Friend will easily understand that gentlemen who take great interest in this question might find sufficient time to organise the scheme in the first instance but might not be able to devote continued attention to it.

*MR. BARTLEY: After my right hon. Friend's statement, I am content to have the Amendment negatived.

Question put, and negatived.

*(5.45.) MR. BARTLEY: There should be some words inserted to empower the Committee, whose names will be mentioned in the Schedule, to appoint the Committee of Inspection. As the Bill stands, the power would only be given by inference. I beg to move to insert the words "appoint the Committee and" after the word "Commissioners."

Amendment moved, in page 1, line 20, after the word "Commissioners" insert "appoint the Committee and."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

(5.47.) MR. GOSCHEN: It seems to me it would be better to insert the words "for the appointment of the Committee and" after the word "scheme."

*MR. BARTLEY: Then if the right hon. Gentleman will move that, I will withdraw my Amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment moved, in page 1, line 21, after "scheme" insert "for the appointment of the Committee and."—(*Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Question, "That those words be there inserted," put, and agreed to.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 3.

*(5.48.) MR. BARTLEY: The clause does not seem to me sufficiently wide, therefore I have prepared an Amendment, which I will now move.

Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 10, after "unnecessary," insert—

"And generally whether it is carrying on its business in a satisfactory manner and according to the rules laid down from time to time by the Committee."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be inserted."

(5.49.) MR. GOSCHEN: I have looked carefully into this matter, and I find that the object the hon. Member desires to effect is already covered by the words "and conduct of the business" in line 8.

Question put, and negatived.

Other Amendments made.

*(5.51.) MR. BARTLEY: It seems to me that the question involved in this clause is one which may well be left to the Committee of Inspection and the National Debt Commissioners, and that it is a pity to introduce the Registrar of Friendly Societies in the matter. I, therefore, move to omit the latter part of the clause.

(5.52.) Amendment proposed, in page 2, line 41, to leave out all after "rules," to end of Clause.—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

MR. GOSCHEN: The hon. Member cannot be aware that the rules at present have to be certified by the Registrar of Friendly Societies, and that, therefore, this is merely applying to the rules the Committee may make, the law applied to the rules made by the banks themselves.

*Mr. BARTLEY: Then I will not press the Amendment.

(5.53.) Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 4 agreed to.

Clause 5.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 35, after "1863," insert—

"Whether involving the withdrawal of any portion of the separate Surplus Fund, in pursuance of Section 29 of the said Act, or not.—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 37, leave out from "The National," to "1863," in line 40, and insert—

"No application to the National Debt Commissioners for a payment from the separate Surplus Fund standing at the credit of any Savings Bank shall be entertained unless it have the previous sanction of the Inspection Committee."—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Clause."

(5.55.) Mr. GOSCHEN: I do not propose to omit—

"The National Debt Commissioners shall have power to determine what expenses shall be deducted."

I do not object to the three lines the hon. Member proposes to insert as a separate paragraph, though I do not think they are necessary.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I will not press the words against the opinion of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he thinks they are unnecessary. It seemed to me that they would give a further security.

*Mr. BARTLEY: They appear to me to be an improvement, as strengthening the Committee of Inspection.

(5.56.) Mr. GOSCHEN: If the hon. Member will move the words as a separate sub-section to follow line 36, I will agree to them.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Amendment proposed, in page 3, line 36, to insert the following sub-section:—

"No application to the National Debt Commissioners for a payment from the separate Surplus Fund standing at the credit of any Savings Bank shall be entertained unless it have the previous sanction of the Inspection Committee."—(*Mr. Buchanan.*)

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. WHITLEY (Liverpool, Everton): I beg to move the omission of this clause. There is great objection felt to this clause on the part of trustees of savings banks, because they think it is unfair that they should be over-ridden by the National Debt Commissioners. The clause gives the Commissioners power to examine the accounts of savings banks. A great deal of friction has arisen because the Commissioners have refused to allow the expenses of savings banks. I believe I express tho opinion of all savings banks when I say there is no control they dislike so much as that of the National Debt Commissioners. They approve of the Bill, but they think when the Committee of Inspection has been constituted there will be no necessity for the National Debt Commissioners having an *imperium in imperio*. It is felt that this clause will very much impede the usefulness of savings banks, and I therefore move its omission.

Amendment proposed, "That Clause 5, as amended, be omitted from the Bill."—(*Mr. Whitley.*)

Question proposed, "That Clause 5, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

(5.59.) Mr. HOWELL: I hope the Government will be firm as to this clause. It seems to me that you might as well get rid of the Bill altogether as omit this clause. I would refer the hon. Member for Everton to what took place at Macclesfield—and I could go into a number of other cases. I ask him to take the Blue Book in his hand and to refer to the evidence, and see if it is not absolutely necessary that this clause should remain. It deals with the only authority, at present, who has any power in these matters, and they only have it to a very limited extent. It seems to me that rather than try to take the power away, our anxiety should be to try to extend it. What we ought to do is to legislate for the depositors in such a way as to secure that there shall be perfect safety in the management of the Trustees. What the depositors require is absolute security, and unless the National Debt Commissioners have some controlling power over the expenditure by the Bank Authorities I do not see how we are to prevent in the future such frauds as have happened in the past. We know that if the Act had been carried out to its full extent there would have been no need for this attempt at legislation, but unfortunately the provisions of that Act were not carried out, and the need of some controlling authority over the bank managers has consequently arisen. If it were needful I could lay before the Committee an enormous mass of facts establishing my position on this point, but I will not weary the House by going into them at this moment. I hope, however, the Chancellor of the Exchequer will see his way to granting some provision increasing the safety of the depositors in these banks.

*SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I am sure we all agree with my hon. Friend in desiring the safety of these banks, but I cannot see that this clause does to any material extent add to the safety of the banks. It refers only to expenses, and surely we might trust that matter to the Inspection Committee. If the Committee cannot be trusted to say what are and what are not necessary expenses, they are not likely to be of any use at all. I understand that the Chancellor of the Exchequer promised the deputation which waited upon him on the 11th June, 1890, that the question of necessary expenses should be left to the Committee. That being so, I hope the Government will agree to the proposal of the hon. Member for Liverpool.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): On looking at the whole question, I am disposed to think that the Bill would be better without this clause. The very scope of the Bill is to interpose a new body, so as to avoid, as far as may be possible, the Government being rendered responsible for the working of the Savings Banks. This clause does not appear to me to touch the security or the safety of the Savings Banks. It deals with a comparatively small matter in reference to which, I think, the discretion of the Committee might be trusted, and as to which there is adequate security.

*SIR A. ROLLIT (Islington, S.): I may say that the managers of Savings Banks, with whom I have been brought into contact of late, heartily approve of the general principle of this Bill, and fully recognise the attention and consideration paid to the questions involved by the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But, at the same time, I have to state that at a recent meeting, over which I had the honour to preside, and which was attended by the representatives of no less than £27,000,000 of invested funds, the universal feeling then expressed was against the retention of this particular clause, and, beyond this, the deputation which I was the means of introducing to the right hon. Gentleman some months ago, fully understood that this clause was to be materially modified—that some considerable concession would be made. The representatives of the Savings Banks feel very strongly that if there is to be a Committee of Inspection at all it ought to be one that is completely trustworthy and ought to be trusted. As a Representative Body, having many experts upon it, it would be thoroughly competent, without the intervention of the National Debt Commissioners. Feeling that the question here raised should be left entirely to that Committee, I hope this clause will be expunged from the Bill.

*MR. BARTLEY: I hope the clause will be retained as one that will have a very useful effect, because it will establish a necessary check with regard to these bank expenses. No doubt in the bulk of the Savings Banks of this country these matters are properly looked after; but there are certain cases in which a check is necessary, and that being so I support the retention of this clause.

MR. GOSCHEN: I certainly did not consider that I had made the promise referred to by the hon. Baronet. In some cases there has been laxity which rendered inquiry necessary, but nine-tenths of the Savings Banks are admirably conducted. The question is how to meet the difficulty. I cannot agree to leave out the clause, but I shall see whether any modification can be made in it. I should like the National Debt Commissioners to have some kind of *locus standi*.

MR. WHITLEY: After what has fallen from my right hon. Friend I will not press my Amendment.

MR. WARMINGTON (Monmouth, W.): Regarding this question from a depositor's point of view, and knowing that the depositors are not fully represented in the management of these banks, I feel that they require the protection that would be afforded by this clause, and, therefore, I trust that the Government will stand firm in maintaining it.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 6 agreed to.

Clause 7.

(6.15.) Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 16, after "November," insert—

> "And he has not during that period performed any of the duties imposed on trustees and managers by the paragraph numbered (2) of Section 6 of 'The Savings Banks Act, 1863.'"—(*Mr. Jackson.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

DR. CLARK (Caithness): Would this not weaken the clause, and should you not have the word "or" instead of "and?" I thought the object of the clause was to throw over the merely ornamental Trustees, who never attend the meetings.

MR. GOSCHEN: The Amendment does, to some extent, weaken the clause. Yet a Trustee may perform a certain number of duties though he never attends the meetings. I am informed that in some of the smaller towns it is difficult to get the attendance of Trustees, who, nevertheless, render valuable service outside the meetings. On the whole, I think the clause should be carried with this modification.

(6.19.) Question put, and agreed to.

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8.

Amendment proposed, in page 4, line 30, after "direct," to add—

> "A similar statement with any other particulars that may be required by the Inspection Committee shall be sent to the Inspection Committee each year at the same time."—(*Mr. Bartley.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

MR. GOSCHEN: I accept the words that

> "A similar statement shall be sent to the Inspection Committee each year at the same time."

Amendment, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 9 agreed to.

Clause 10.

Amendments made.

*SIR A. ROLLIT: The Bill as it stands limits the opening of investment departments of banks to November 1890. These Investment Departments have been attended with excellent results, and have formed one of the most useful features of the banks. Under these circumstances, it seems somewhat hard that the door should be somewhat suddenly, and without notice, closed against the development of this part of the business of the banks. At a representative meeting of the banking interest there was a very general feeling that the period ought to be extended for the formation of these departments.

Amendment proposed, in page 5, line 36, to leave out "ninety," and insert "ninety-one."—(*Sir A. Rollit.*)

MR. GOSCHEN: I am not much inclined to accept this Amendment. This investment business does not really belong to savings banks at all, and I am not prepared to say that it is desirable to extend this class of business. In fact, I think great precautions ought to be taken to separate the two. If we were to prolong the date until 1891 it would give existing savings banks opportunity to engage in investment business. I have endeavoured, as far as possible, not to interfere with the existing business of Trustee Savings Banks. I trust the Committee will not assent to this Amendment.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I agree with the Chancellor of the Exchequer that it would not be desirable to extend the business of the banks in this direction, especially the smaller banks, and I support the Government in their view.

*MR. BARTLEY: Perhaps the Chancellor of the Exchequer will accept my Amendment, for it seems a little hard to shut the door for ever. By my Amendment the Commissioners or Committee of Inspection, where they thought it desirable, might give particular banks facilities to engage in the investment business. I think my Amendment would prevent all danger of anything being done recklessly, and some advantage might arise from it.

Mr. GOSCHEN: I am afraid that I could not assent to that view, because it would involve the laying down of a guide to the Committee, besides giving permission to some banks, while refusing others. I do not think it is a business which should be carried on.

Amendment negatived.

Clause as amended, agreed to.

Clause 11.

An Amendment made.

Question proposed, "That the Clause, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

*(6.25.) Mr. E. BRODIE HOARE (Hampstead): I beg to move the omission of Clause 11, and I do so as a protest against the further extension of the limit of deposit in these excellent benevolent institutions bolstered up by Government credit, which compete most unfairly with private and other banks, especially in small towns. I cannot but think that the reason given in the Bill for the change is most inadequate. It is that difficulty has arisen about the due apportionment of principal and interest. If the Trustees of these banks cannot see the difference between principal and interest, they are not fit for their position. It is only due to the enterprise of banks in the country that they should have fair competition, and not to the unlimited competition of the Government for deposits, which are to them their very life-blood.

*Mr. BARTLEY: I think the bankers owe a debt of gratitude to these banks. They have taught thousands the habit of banking, and so largely increased joint-stock banks, which are becoming familiar institutions at so many corners of the streets as almost to be as numerous as public-houses.

(6.29.) Sir J. LUBBOCK: It is quite true that the proposal in the present Bill is but small; still, at the same time, it is another step in the direction of Government interference with private enterprise. I join with my hon. Friend the Member for Hampstead in expressing my regret that the Government have introduced this proposal. It does not affect the bankers of London, but it does affect many of the banks with branches in small places. The Government can only undertake one side of banking business. There are three branches of a banking business—the receiving deposits, keeping accounts, and the lending out of deposits. The money of the district is lent out, in fact, to small tradesmen. Savings Banks perform most admirably one portion of banking, namely, deposit business; but they cannot carry on the other functions of banking, namely, the keeping accounts, and making advances to those in business. The effect is to drain money from the provinces and bring it up to London. It does not affect London banks, but I do think it is unfair to banks in country districts; and though the proposed change is not large in itself, still I am glad that the hon. Member for Hampstead has protested against it, because it is another case of Government interference with private enterprise.

Question put, and agreed to.

New Clause—

"The Treasury may from time to time, by a minute to be laid before Parliament, fix the date for the presentation to Parliament of any accounts required by the Acts relating to savings banks to be so presented."

—brought up, and read a first time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Clause be now read a second time."

(6.36.) Dr. CLARK: I think we ought to hear from the right hon. Gentleman what it is intended to do by means of this clause. It practically abolishes all statutory requirements as to presenting accounts, and if it is passed the Postmaster General will not be compelled to send in his Report as heretofore. I have heard that the clause is intended to relieve the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Post Office of the difficulty he has been placed in by the recent strike.

(6.37.) Mr. JACKSON: It is sometimes found to be quite impossible to present the accounts by the required date, and the result is that the accounts are presented in dummy—an objectionable practice. The Government think the power of fixing a later date might safely be given to the Treasury if it were found necessary to do so in order to meet the exigencies of the Public Service.

(6.39.) MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): The object of the clause is to relieve the Postmaster General from the serious dilemma in which he was landed by his gross mismanagement of the Savings Banks Department. It was rumoured that a specific Bill was to be introduced for the purpose of extending the time by which the Postmaster General is bound to produce his accounts. So far as the Trustee Savings Banks are concerned, I think that this clause might reasonably be allowed. It is obvious that the relations between the Treasury and the Trustee Savings Banks are not such as to lead the Treasury to extend the date for the presentation of accounts unduly; but we know how singularly intimate are the relations between the Treasury and the Post Office, and therefore we know that this power would be too readily used.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

MR. PICKERSGILL: I now move "That this clause do not apply to the Post Office Savings Bank."

(6.42.) MR. JACKSON: I cannot accept this Amendment. The only dilemma from which the Postmaster General will be relieved will be to save the clerks of the Department some amount of overtime, to which some of them object. It is obvious it is impossible to present the account by the date prescribed, and I therefore ask that the Treasury shall have power to fix a suitable date. I appeal to my hon. Friend not to press his Amendment.

(6.43.) MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): If the date now fixed is too early, the proper thing to do is to alter it and fix some other date, but not to vest this general dispensing power in the Treasury. But a better method still would be to increase the staff, so that it should be adequate to the work to be done. I think the difficulty the Postmaster General is in is due not to any unreasonable unwillingness on the part of the Savings Bank clerks to work overtime, but to the enormous demands made upon their time.

(6.44.) MR. JACKSON: I am quite willing to accede to the suggestion of the hon. Member, and will bring up a new clause on Report fixing a date. If the suggestion is, as I believe, thrown out in a friendly spirit, I am quite willing now to withdraw this clause on that understanding.

(6.45.) DR. CLARK: I think this is a bad system we are falling into of inserting in new Bills clauses modifying provisions of existing Acts without giving the House any indication of what is being done. I think it is only fair to the Committee that when such changes are proposed the official in charge of the Bill should say what is being done. Had it not been for the rumours which were circulated, we might not have known that this clause was intended for the relief of the Postmaster General.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Schedule 1.

Question proposed, "That this be the 1st Schedule of the Bill."

(6.49.) MR. GOSCHEN: On this I may announce the names of those gentlemen who have been chosen to frame the scheme for determining the appointment of the Inspection Committee, and its powers. They are Mr. Lyulph Stanley, Lord F. Hervey, M.P., Sir A. Rollit, M.P., Mr. John Ellis, M.P., Mr. T. C. Wright, of Lincoln's Inn, a Trustee of the Bloomsbury Bank, Mr. John Ure, Dean of Guild, Trustee of the Glasgow Savings Bank, and Mr. Henry Court, late Assistant Comptroller of the National Debt. It will be seen that three of these gentlemen represent savings banks, three are perfectly independent, and one is an expert, who will advise the Committee on technical matters. I will ask the Committee to allow these names to be put in the Schedule, and if there is an objection taken to any of them it can be brought forward on the Report stage.

Question put, and agreed to.

Remaining Schedules agreed to.

Bill reported; as amended, to be considered upon Tuesday next at Two of the clock.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 251.)

Reasons for disagreeing to Lords Amendments, reported, and agreed to:—To be communicated to The Lords.

MAIL SHIPS BILL.—(No. 163.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(6.51.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): In moving the Second Reading of this Bill, I wish to explain that its object is to confirm a Convention by which British mail ships will be put on the same footing as foreign ones. The fact of foreign mail ships possessing the privileges of men-of-war has caused great discontent among British shipowners, who are placed in an inferiority to foreign owners, but they will now be on precisely the same footing. There is a provision that, if a warrant is to be executed on board, notice must be given to the Consular officer, and the ship may be detained for an hour if he is absent at the time. Power is also given to enter into a permanent bail bond, that bail bond and damages claimed under it to be enforceable in the country of jurisdiction, so that any claim against a French ship will be recoverable in London. There is one provision which will require shipmasters to receive on board mails in a port of France as in an English port at the same rates as those fixed by the Postal Union of 1874. It is most important that this Bill should be read a second time this evening, in order that the new Convention may be ratified before the end of the month.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday next.

ELECTORAL DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 182.)

Considered in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS

That they have agreed to Technical Instruction Bill, with Amendments.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to make provisions in regard to the Registration of certain Writs in the Divisions of the General Register of Sasines for Scotland." [Registration of Certain Writs (Scotland) Bill. [Lords.]

TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION BILL. (No. 40.)

Lords Amendments to be considered forthwith; considered, and agreed to.

ASCENSION ISLAND.

Address for—

"Return showing the cost of maintaining the Naval Establishments in the Island of Ascension, giving the pay and allowances, separately, of the Officers, and the number, pay, and allowances of the Seamen and Marines, and other men employed there, the cost of victualling, and the charges under other Naval Votes:"

"And, the average value of coal and other stores issued to Her Majesty's Ships during the last three years, and the average number of men in hospital other than those stationed in the Island."—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre.*)

RAILWAY RATES AND CHARGES PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS.

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged the following Members from the Joint Committee of the Lords and Commons on the Railway Rates and Charges Provisional Order Bills: Mr. Colman and Sir Henry Selwin-Ibbetson; and had appointed in substitution: Sir Joseph Bailey and Mr. Dickson.

SELECTION (STANDING COMMITTEES).

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY reported from the Committee of Selection; That they had discharged Mr. Round from the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping and Manufacture; and had appointed in substitution, Mr. Brooke Robinson.

Sir JOHN MOWBRAY further reported from the Committee; That they had added to the Standing Committee on Trade (including Agriculture and Fishing), Shipping, and Manufactures, Mr. Roche.

Report to lie upon the Table.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

(6.59.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): What will be the business on Monday?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): On Monday the Government propose—first, to ask the House to agree to the Committee on Scotch Private Bill Procedure Bill; after that they propose to take the further stages of one or two small Bills on the Paper, and then to get the Speaker out of the Chair on the Civil Service Estimates.

EVENING SITTING.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

CROFTER ACT, 1886.

(9.0.) **MR. MUNRO FERGUSON** (Leith, &c.): The Motion which I have placed on the Paper refers to a portion of the group of subjects which are embraced under the head of the crofter difficulty, and I have purposely framed the Motion so as to make it of an entirely non-contentious character. The Motion aims at an object which is quite unpolitical; but the question at issue is one which in the public interest should be dealt with at the earliest possible moment. It will be in the recollection of the House that under the Crofter Act, 1886, very considerable rights were given to the occupiers of land in certain districts of the Highlands. The crofters acquired large proprietary rights in their holdings, and tenants in townships became part owners of the grazings. But, at the same time, no legal status was conferred upon the men entitling them to be represented in Court, to sue or to be sued. While the power of control in regard to the management of common outruns has been taken out of the proprietors' hands, nothing has been put in its place, and the consequence is that in many townships something very like chaos reigns, so far as the common interest in the grazings is concerned. Lord Napier's Committee reported in favour of conferring corporate powers upon crofter townships. In the Act of 1886 this portion of the Committee's Report was disregarded. Unless some plan is found under which tenants can exercise some effective control over the management of outruns, we shall have a continual period of strife, and a very large proportion of the benefit the tenants would otherwise enjoy under the Crofter Act will be lost to them. I have had many letters from crofters in different parts of Ross-shire asking for interference such as I propose. Very great difficulty exists in the Highlands to get a number of tenants to agree about the management of a common stock. The Commission, in fixing the rent, allocated the interest in the commonalty, and attached a portion of the commonalty to each separate croft. Some crofters maintain a larger stock upon the outrun than they are entitled to maintain there, and at the same time pay no rent to the landlord or compensation to the other tenants of the outrun. A simple remedy might be found in giving two-thirds of the township the right to appoint managers, who would be able to exercise certain powers; but I think it would be better the Commission should have the power, where the landlord and crofters or the crofters fail to agree on a system of management, to call upon the tenants or the landlord and the crofters to appoint a managing committee for the township. In case of failure on the part of the tenants and landlord the Commission should have power to appoint managers and frame rules and regulations for their guidance. Managers are wanted, because though the Commission might settle the question of stocking and fencing rights for themselves it would be a very lengthy matter: it would take many years to get over the ground. Besides, managers would be useful in many other ways. It might be one of the duties of managers to adjust the stock each crofter was entitled to have, and to fix the grazing rents for horses, cattle and sheep. The managers would exercise control over the township fences, over the repair of the roads, which now are grievously neglected. They would also control the rights of the crofters in regard to sea-ware. The managers would be empowered to cause extra stock to be paid for or else removed, would pay the rents due for overstock to those who had understock, and generally arrange for the management of the stock on the ground. If the rules were broken, the managers should have power to go to the Sheriff and obtain a writ, which would enable them to sell the surplus stock. In that case the first charge on the sale would be the expenses of the proceedings. I think it would be found that this system might lead to the development of the Club Paid System, which is very desirable in the Highlands. I hope I may claim the favourable consideration by the Government of the proposal I have laid before the House. I ask them either to bring in an amending Bill, or else undertake to support a Bill which I should be very glad to bring in. My proposal does not partake of anything of the nature of a suspiciously reforming character. My object is simply to get the full benefit out of the measures which have previously been passed by the House. I have raised this question by itself, as I know very well that if it were mixed up with other matters there would be very little hope of obtaining a speedy remedy. I shall certainly oppose any attempt which is made to alter the scope of my intentions. On this ground I invite general support of this Resolution, which, however modest in appearance, will, I believe, effect real good, promoting, as it will, peace and the good conduct of affairs in the Highlands.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, the Crofter Act, 1886, should be amended in so far as to confer upon the Commission powers to regulate the conditions and management of Crofters' Common Grazings,"—(*Mr. Munro Ferguson,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(9.14.) MR. FRASER-MACKINTOSH (Invernessshire): The hon. Member for Leith has done good service in bringing this matter before the attention of the House, though I regret that his Motion is not more comprehensive in its character. One of the most pressing grievances which came before the Crofter Commission of 1883 was that relating to the question of grazing and the stock upon club farms. It was so very pressing that our Chairman, Lord Napier, laid down some very stringent rules with regard to the management of club farms, but the Act of 1886 to a great extent ignored the point. The grievance is this: There may be 20 tenants of one stock farm; the whole of the tenants may not be in the same pecuniary position, the consequence being that the moderately wealthy man puts a larger stock upon the land than he is entitled to do to the detriment of the poorer crofters, who are, however, obliged to pay their proportions of the rent. I do not think the Lord Advocate can for a moment have any objection to the principle involved in this Motion. I am quite aware he and his predecessors have always been indisposed to bring forward Crofter Bills, lest attempts to introduce comprehensive Amendments should be made; but if the right hon. and learned Gentleman can see his way to bring in a Bill, or promise his support to a measure brought in by a private Member, he will do great service, because I can testify that a grievance does here exist which ought to be speedily remedied.

*(9.16.) MR. PARKER SMITH (Lanark, Partick): It is a question open to argument whether the Crofter Act, 1886, requires any Amendment as regards the relation of crofters and landlords, but into that question I do not propose to enter on the present occasion. The Act, however, is deficient in not defending the crofters from each other. In communities of crofters, rights are so thoroughly and completely interlaced that the comfortable conditions and relations of life depend very much on there being some means of determining and loosening these rights from each other. Such matters as over-stocking, bringing down cattle too soon from the hills to the low districts, the cutting of peat, and drainage, are matters which do not concern the landlord in any way, but upon the settlement of which the happiness and the comfort of the crofters depend. In addition to the common grazings, the ground under crop is held in tiny and unenclosed plots. It is in evidence, for example, that on the Torridon Estate the holding of one man consisted of 43 plots — the whole, I suppose, not amounting to an acre. There is no wonder that difficulties of neighbourship arise when rights relating to ground are mixed up in this way. As a crofter expressively put it in a somewhat complex and involved sentence: "We were not understanding one another

amongst ourselves in these matters." Public opinion is, no doubt, very strong on such points, but something further is needed in those exceptional cases in which a man does not regard public opinion. In old times, if a man made himself unpleasant to his neighbours, the proprietor had the right of sending him away. This is now altogether changed. The Crofters' Act contemplates the landlord imposing conditions not only in his own individual interest but for the benefit of the crofters at large. That is occasionally done. I hold in my hands the terms of a lease which provides that, constables having been elected by the crofters of the township with the approval of the proprietor, the constables shall report to the proprietor any breach of certain specified regulations made for the common good. This lease has been in existence for four years, on one of the few estates where the crofters did not go into Court, but had their rents settled by agreement. It is so satisfactory to both parties that, at its expiry next Martinmas, it will probably be continued indefinitely by tacit relocation. But I do not know of another lease in Scotland, and certainly not of one where conditions as to the mutual relations of the crofters are inserted. Such conditions imply active personal interest and continuous residence on the part of the landlord. In general, the crofters have gone into Court to get their rents fixed, but they are at arm's length with the proprietor, and any questions which exist between themselves they are left free to fight out in the best way they can, without the intervention or assistance of the proprietor. Very few landlords in the Highlands now interest themselves in the affairs of the crofters. By your Act you have made them to a great extent rent-chargers, and have put them at arm's length with the crofters. There are good reasons, no doubt, for what you have done, but you must carry through the policy you have initiated. You must fill the place made vacant, by the patriarchal power of the landlord being to some extent superseded. You must rely to a considerable extent on what the Napier Commission relied upon—on the feeling in the minds of the crofters for corporate action by townships, and you must supply the place of the landlord's ground officer by constables to be chosen by the crofters. Mr. Carmichael gave Lord Napier's Commission a very interesting account of the assistance the township constables had been in the Western Hebrides. We can see that to a certain extent that account is idealised and somewhat poetical, but it has a considerable basis of truth. The system of appointing constables on the estate to which I have already referred, has worked thoroughly and effectually, and has made these small matters go smoothly and easily. It would be well to let the crofters have an opportunity, under the law, of appointing such men to look after common interests. But you must have some kind of sanction. Formerly the sanction was obtained by a visit to the big house, or by means of a formidable letter on the most official-looking foolscap that could be obtained. In the final resort you will have to give power to the Sheriff to fine. I do not see that you can put the power of fining into the hands of these constables, but you can give them the power of reporting to the Sheriff, and give him the power of imposing small fines, or, in the last resort, of putting a man out of his holding. That would very likely mean an increase of the number of sheriff-substitutes, which was called for by the Commission in its Report as a desirable and useful reform in the Highlands. To a certain extent it might be felt that there is an objection to bringing the Sheriff into these matters. But you are passing from the period of the dominion of custom to that of the dominion of law, and it is necessary to acknowledge that you give some authority to the law in these matters. I believe the power of the law would never have to be called in, and that it would be sufficient to have it there in the background.

(9.30.) DR. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): The Mover and Seconder of the Resolution said this was a very small matter indeed, and I quite agree with them. I understand the Government are going to accept the Resolution, and I suppose we must be thankful for very small mercies. I, myself, think that in many instances this proposal will be resented by the crofters, who will say they are able to manage their own affairs. In the village in which I was brought up, it was the custom for the inhabitants to meet and appoint two or three men to look after the interests of the village, and everything had to be done as these men ordered.

(9.32.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

(9.33.) DR. McDONALD: I know this proposal is regarded as necessary in some places, but I am afraid it will not be received with a very good grace by a great many communities in the Highlands. In a great many districts the people have been very dependent on the estate managers, who have done everything for them, and now they are not able to take such good care of themselves as other communities which have not been so dependent on the estate managers in the past. If the Government think proper to pass an Act specially for this small matter I have no objection, only if they do so, I think they will find it wise not to make it obligatory, as the crofters are perfectly capable of appointing men to manage their affairs for them in their own way. I think, also, as some authorities have said, that the Act already gives this power, if it is required.

(9.35.) THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): It may be advisable at this stage to state the views of the Government on this Motion. The hon. Member who has just spoken has intimated that certain high authorities are of opinion that the existing law is sufficient to meet the specific grievance, clearly and frankly put forward by the hon. Member for Leith. I shall await with interest for the disclosure of their names. What is the grievance which is stated to exist? All who are acquainted with the Highlanders are aware that many of the crofters, in addition to the generally small patch of ground of which they are the sole occupants, have a right of grazing over a common piece of ground. Before the passing of the Crofters' Act the adjustment of the rights *inter se* of these tenants was determined by the landlord, who assigned to each tenant the degree of use of the common ground to which he should be entitled. Accordingly, by the most direct operation of the contract, any departure from the precise measure of right given to each crofter was certain to be put right by the landlord's power of bringing the contract to an end. I gather, from what has been said in the Debate, that it is one of the consequences of the Crofters Act, that as the power of the landlord in this respect has been taken away, there is no authority now in existence which has power to make regulations as to the number of cattle which each crofter shall be entitled to place upon the common grazing ground, and to prevent abuses of the common right. The question, therefore, is one between the crofters *inter se*, and does not concern the landlords in any way. The hon. Member for Ross (Dr. McDonald) appeared to think that there was some tribunal that had the power of checking the abuses that have been indicated, but I confess that I do not know of any such tribunal myself. Probably it was an omission from the Crofters Act that no such tribunal was appointed. As far as my knowledge goes, I confirm the statements of the hon. Member for Leith (Mr. Munro Ferguson). It is quite true that there are traces in the Crofters Act of a desire to give the power of regulating common use to the Crofters Commission, but they relate to a more limited class of holdings than are referred to in the Motion. I should advise the House to assume that there are deficiencies of controlling power in this matter. I am bound to say I think a remedy is desirable, and I think also there is nothing in the suggestion that has been made, as to the kind of remedy, which is inconsistent with the principles already recognised by the law. We are here to regulate the inequities and anomalies which may arise through want of agreement among joint possessors, and I cannot see anything which is at all opposed to sound principles, either of law or policy, in assigning the consideration of questions of this kind to some administrative Department. Then the next question is how can that be done? The Government are disposed to assent to the Resolution proposed by the hon. Member for Leith, but he will allow me to point out to him that the mode of proceeding requires some care, following in the direction of simplicity and directness rather than by the use of a complex and cumbrous apparatus. The

Motion of the hon. Member is in the following terms—

> "That the Crofters Act, 1886, should be amended in so far as to confer upon the Commission powers to regulate the conditions and management of crofters' common grazings."

I am prepared to assent to that proposition, and accordingly, when the hon. Member comes, as it will fall to him to do, to offer a Bill on the subject to the House, he will probably start on the assumption that the only call for interference is where there is failure of agreement among those interested. In that I am entirely in accord with the hon. Member for Ross, for I cannot suppose it will be considered desirable that Parliament should thrust upon the Crofters Commission in the first place, and upon Highland communities in the second place, any rigid or Procrustean method, but rather that the proposal should be that the Commission should enter when there is failure of agreement and need of rectification. That will be following practical and useful precedents. In truth, if people were reasonable, there ought to be no need for the intervention of law in the matter; but from the beginning of time joint occupancies have shown a disposition towards discord, and accordingly, as lawyers know, there are rules of common law by which the quarrels of joint possessors are solved in a Court of Law, but only in the case of disagreement is there this intervention. Therefore I trust the suggestion of the hon. Member for Ross will find favour, that there shall be no interference except when there is application to the Commissioners to remedy grievances existing, and which cannot be rectified by common action and in common council. The hon. Member will also probably consider whether it is necessary to set up an elaborate apparatus having some standing and local origin. I gather that the hon. Member for Ross deprecates that, and probably it might be for the House to say whether the setting up of district tribunals with more or less sonorous titles would not draw upon such bodies more envy than respect, and will take into consideration the question whether it is not preferable to adopt the simpler method of making application to the Crofters Commission to lay down regulations on the matter in dispute, and any

infringement of the regulation should be matter of application by any one feeling aggrieved to the Judge ordinary of the district. This would be complete, without complexity; and failure to observe those rights could be dealt with in a legal manner, and the remedy would be open to all whose rights were violated. I do not know how far the hon. Member might consider it necessary to go; and this is a matter entirely for the sequel, and not having reference to the Motion itself. The hon. Gentleman will probably consider whether it is desirable to anticipate difficulties, or to deal only with those which are observable. As I understand, the real difficulty arises from the attempt to occupy, by those who have more means or are more powerful than their neighbours, more than their share of the common pasture. There may be other difficulties about the herdings, but probably it would be wiser, in the meantime, to confine the regulations to the difficulty at hand. I think the House will be well advised in not interfering too much in laying down rules for people in matters they ought to determine for themselves. It would be a very great pity if we were to outstrip the necessities of the time and put these people into leading strings through the Crofter Commission, by means of crofter constables or by other means under any new or old-fangled names. I have said all it behoves me to say in the nature of suggestion, and I trust I have not said anything which at all grates on the feelings of even the most advanced champion of the Crofters Act. We are not now dealing with ulterior views. I understand that the Motion is directed to this specific grievance in connection with the privilege of common grazing. In this spirit I accept the proposition, and I find nothing to take exception to in the Motion, while reserving to the Government full freedom of criticism of any Bill that may be brought in, as to scope, extent, machinery and details. I think I have with sufficient frankness stated the general view with which we accept the Motion.

(9.49.) **Dr. CLARK** (Caithness): These may be the grievances of which the hon. Member for Leith complains, but these must arise in connection with the new crofters who have come in without signing the old estate regulations. If the hon. Member will look at Sub-section 5 of the 1st section of the Crofters Act, he will find that the estate regulations are to continue, and as all the crofters signed these, and as they lay down the proportions of stock each man can put on the grazing land, the only difficulty must be with those who have come into their crofts since the Act was passed five years ago, and, of course, if these have not signed the regulations they are not bound by them. Under the last paragraph of the 12th section of the Act, power is given to the Commissioners to determine all questions relating to fuel-cutting, and the points raised by the hon. Member for the Partick Division. I think also, the last sub-section of the 21st section gives power to the Commissioners to determine questions as to grazing. The grievances the hon. Member has alluded to, can only occur on a few estates, where there are no regulations and where those who have acquired their rights to croft have done so since the passing of the Act. In such cases grievances may exist and the landlords may not put themselves to the trouble of interfering; but I think in most cases the regulations which crofters have signed determine the amount of stock each shall put upon the land and the respective rights of crofters. I do not, however, know that there is any power given to the Commissioners to compel obedience to the regulations, and it seems to me that if anything is required it is an extension of the powers of the Commissioners under the 5th sub-section, in addition to the power they now have to prevent violations of the conditions, both as between the crofters and their neighbours and between the crofters and the landlord. I have no objection at all to my hon. Friend bringing in a Bill of this kind, though I do not think this has been much of a grievance. There are very serious grievances we should like to bring before the House, and several of us have made every effort to do so. We have balloted again and again for an opportunity to bring crofters' grievances before the House, but such is the irony of fate, that while we have been unsuccessful an outside Member secures the opportunity to bring this infinitesimal, this homeopathic grievance under notice. Well, it is the chance of the ballot, and we must not complain, though I think we had a right to complain when the opportunity my hon. Friend the Member for Sutherland (Mr. Sutherland) had obtained, was appropriated for Government business. I congratulate my hon. Friend the Member for Leith upon being so fortunate as to find this opportunity for his Motion, and to find the Lord Advocate ready to give it such a friendly reception. There are other and much more urgent matters in relation to the Crofters Act—there is that concession the Government have allowed to Irish tenants, and yet deny to crofters, the bringing leasehold tenants under the Act. It engenders the strongest sense of injustice when a man finds his neighbours on either side of him obtaining reductions in their rent from 40 to 75 per cent., while he is compelled to continue paying his old rent. I do not intend to introduce this subject now, but I hope that during the remainder of the Session we may be more successful in the ballot and bring these much more serious grievances before the House.

(9.55.) MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I am glad to find the Lord Advocate offers no opposition to this Motion. The right hon. Gentleman seems to express a preference for the Sheriff's Court over the Crofter Commission.

MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: No; what I said was, I thought the duty of laying down regulations might properly, and to a large extent, be left to the Commission; but that violations of these regulations should be dealt with by the ordinary tribunals as breaches of contract.

MR. A. SUTHERLAND: Yes, that there should be an appeal from the order of the Commission to the Sheriff's Court. But I should prefer to see any such power left with the Commission entirely rather than to have the power vested in the Sheriff's Court. I also wish to say in regard to the difficulties expressed by the hon. Member for the Partick Division, that, although I have had considerable experience of these matters in the Highlands, these difficulties between individual crofters are entirely new to me. I support with pleasure the Resolution of my hon. Friend the Member for Leith. I have no exception to take to the manner in which the Lord Advocate has expressed his view, and I hope that when legislative proposals are made they will find acceptance in an equally kindly spirit.

(9.56.) SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): This has been the most carefully circumscribed Debate we have had for a long time. The issue is so narrow that the most fertile imaginations have not carried speakers beyond it, and every hon. Member who has spoken has kept well within the limit the hon. Member for Boston (Mr. Atkinson) laid down in his Bill for the limitation of the duration of speeches. There is not a word in the speech of the Lord Advocate to which I can take exception, and I think he suggested a very good Amendment to the proposal when he recommended that the services of the Commissioners should only be called in when wanted. That is a condition of legislation I should like to see more of in the House. I have read the section upon which my hon. Friend the Member for Ross seemed to rely for his suggestion that the Commissioners already have this power, and as to which the Lord Advocate does not take a similar view. It appears to me that the section applies to grazing in connection with enlargement of holdings under the Act, and we know, therefore, that the section will not have a very wide application at present. My hon. Friend brought forward this Motion with the hope that, being accepted by the Government, it would be met by a Bill from the Government Bench. That, it seems, is not to be the case, but we are far from complaining of the suggestion of the Lord Advocate that the difficulty should be met by a Bill from this side of the House. This Debate has been limited because the Resolution is limited in its terms; but when a Bill is brought forward from this side of the House, I know from private conversations with my hon. Friends on this subject, that the Bill will not be so limited; it will be of a very different nature, and I earnestly trust that our legislative proposals will be accepted in as amicable, reasonable, and statesmanlike a manner as this Resolution has to-night been received.

(9.58.) MR. J. P. B. ROBERTSON: The right hon. Gentleman will allow me to say—for I do not wish him to be under misapprehension—that my offer of friendly consideration had reference solely to a Bill exclusively directed to the definite subject alluded to in the Resolution.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I understand that entirely.

Question put, and negatived.

Words added.

Main Question, as amended, put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this House the Crofter Act, 1886, should be amended in so far as to confer upon the Commission powers to regulate the conditions and management of Crofters' Common Grazings.

Resolved, That this House will immediately resolve itself into the Committee of Supply.—(*Mr. Sidney Herbert.*)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

NATIONAL MUSEUMS AND GALLERIES (OPENING ON SUNDAY).

*(10.1.) MR. LAWSON (St. Pancras, W.): In the Motion which I have placed on the Paper the House will renew its acquaintance with an old friend. I have, however, varied the terms adopted in former Resolutions of the kind. I ask the House to say it is expedient to open those national museums and galleries that are now shut in London on Sunday for certain hours and under special regulations. By "certain hours" I mean on Sunday afternoon from 1 to 6, and by "special regulations" I mean that no man shall be obliged to work more than six days a week. Sir J. Walmesley and Mr. Peter Taylor often introduced Motions on this subject over a long period of years. They laid the foundations of the work of religious emancipation, I am going to ask this House to complete to-night. In 1863 this House refused, to pass though Lord Palmerston, who was then Prime Minister, supported, a Motion to open on Sundays the Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh. Only two years ago the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works (Mr. Plunket) opened those gardens on Sunday amid general applause, and in answer to a question I put to him he said that conspicuous success had attended his action. The murmur of intolerance that proceeded from a small section has died away, and

I am happy to say that the churches of Scotland still flourish exceedingly. The hon. Member opposite (Sir R. Fowler), who has set down an Amendment that he will be unable to move, has every year been in the habit of voting sums of money on the Estimates in order to keep open on Sunday the National Collection in Dublin, Kew Gardens, Hampton Court Palace, and Greenwich Hospital. Greenwich Hospital is just as much in the County of London as Bethnal Green Museum. If the people of Bethnal Green take a ticket to Greenwich on Sunday they can visit the Hospital there, and yet you shut the doors of their own Museum in their faces. That Museum was built and opened in the midst of a crowded and industrial population in order to relieve the monotony of their lives and to give them opportunity of enjoyment and education. The late Sir R. Wallace, who lent his splendid collection to inaugurate that Museum, wished it to be opened on Sundays just as on other days of the week, but his request was refused. Since that time the Rector of Bethnal Green, and every man of influence in the place, have been of one mind on the subject, and only to-day I presented a Petition from 66,000 people in the neighbourhood of Bethnal Green asking for admission to the museum on Sundays. The late Mr. W. E. Forster said—

> "If the people who wanted to go to the museums and picture galleries liked to take a railway ticket to Hampton Court they found they were at liberty to look at the pictures there, but they could not look at the pictures close by their own doors—it might be at Bethnal Green."

To the vast majority of the people Sunday is the only day when they have an opportunity of visiting these collections. South Kensington is closed in the same way as Bethnal Green, and actually the Raphael cartoons were to be seen by the public at Hampton Court Palace on Sundays until a very recent date ; but when they were moved back to South Kensington, it became impossible to get a glance at them. The South Kensington Museum contains another collection called the Sheepshanks Collection. The gentleman who made that splendid donation to the country believed it might be seen, and wished it to be seen, on Sunday, but no notice was taken of his wish on the subject. In the old Debates which took place from time to time in this House on the subject, it was the custom always to throw the fathers and theologians from one side to the other. In those days hon. Gentlemen quoted Luther and Paley to show that Sunday ought not to be observed for mere observance's sake. Happily, to-day we can base our contention on more solid grounds. Evening opening used always to be proposed as an alternative, but there was little evidence to be produced on one side or the other. Now we have proved results respecting both Sunday opening and evening opening in nearly every big town in England, and in the Metropolis itself. Last year the Financial Secretary (Mr. Jackson) did, I believe, provide for the evening opening of the British Museum. In answer to a question I put to him the other night he gave the results. He said—

> "From February, 1890, to December, 1890, there was an almost unbroken decline from an average per evening of 635 to an average of 90. The average for January and February this year has been 120 and 160 respectively."

Earlier in the year the right hon. Gentleman informed the House that it was not the intention of the Government to devote any more money to the purpose. The officials say it is impossible to open the National Gallery in the evening because of the difference made by artificial light. They say, also, that evening opening simply converts the museums into middle-class lounges, that you do not get the working class to go there in the evening, and cannot get them to go. A working man after a hard day's labour does not feel inclined to trudge all over London to spend the evening in a museum. He is like some of us who, of an evening, like to present ourselves more or less garnished before those with whom we associate. They are like the hon. Baronet opposite (Sir R. Fowler), who would always prefer to change his dress before presenting himself at a civic banquet. They do not like, when taking recreation, to show themselves in their working clothes, and that is the reason they do not attend the museum of an evening. In 1872, when this question was debated, Colonel Marcus Beresford—a Metropolitan Member—told the House that if museums were opened on Sundays there would be a repetition of the French Commune, while a quarter of a century before other hon. Gentlemen said that Sunday opening would involve an English edition of the Reign of Terror. It was the custom then to draw distorted pictures of the Continental Sunday, and to represent it as one long debauch of drink and atheism. I had hoped that this sort of talk had died out, but I have received a memorandum from those representing the opponents of the Motion in which it is gravely stated that crime in Continental cities springs directly from the opening of museums on Sundays. They say—

> "Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Florence, and many other cities of the Continent, capitals of varying nationalities, and representing both the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions, have had museums open and the provision of State-supplied and other recreations for many years, with the result of almost unbroken toil for immense numbers of working men, and with a state of morality so much darker than that of London, that infanticide, illegitimacy, suicide, and murder attain a far higher proportion in relation to population in all those cities than in this Metropolis."

What a ludicrous misunderstanding of cause and effect! Why, the crime of Continental Cities has no more to do with the opening of museums than the charges at Westminster Police Court have to do with the presence of strangers in this House, or the Whitechapel murders have to do with the present representation of the Metropolis in Parliament. The facts are due entirely to other conditions, and I am bound to say I hardly feel inclined to occupy the time of the House by attacking the antiquated bogey of the Continental Sunday. In nearly all the great towns of England — in about 20 — the museums, galleries, or libraries are opened on Sunday, Liverpool being the sole notable exception, and the statistics show that the opening has been a complete success. The list includes Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle, and Halifax. From Manchester the Report for 1890 shows that the total number of visitors to the libraries and reading-rooms on Sunday was 248,840, or an average of 5,585 each Sunday. On the last of the free Sundays 9,179 persons visited the City Art Gallery, and on the four there was a total of 19,459. In Birmingham Sunday opening has been adopted since 1864, when the Sunday attendances at the Aston Hall Museum was 50,000; last year it was 139,500; at the Birmingham Art Gallery and Museum the average Sunday attendance was, in 1889, 23,100, and at the Reference Library the issues amounted to 23,728. At Sheffield the Report says—

> "There can be no doubt that the Sunday opening is greatly appreciated, and it is a very striking fact that the number of visitors in three hours on Sunday is more than double the average on a week day, when the Museum and Art Gallery are open nine and a half hours per day."

There is no one in the great towns who has done better service in the cause than Mr. Whitworth Wallis, Curator of the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and he says—

> "At Birmingham the Sunday opening of the Art Gallery has become quite a recognised institution—even the severest Sabbatarians in our midst no longer think it worth while offering the mildest protest against the plan. They philosophically bow to the logically inevitable — thousands visit the Gallery on Sunday afternoons; they are orderly in their manners, and appreciative in their remarks; no damage has ever been done, and little trouble is given to the staff."

There is a curious fact about the Birmingham Art Gallery. Objection was made to employing Christians in a museum on the Sunday, and the difficulty was overcome by the employment of Jews. That reminds me of a cynical remark attributed to Mr. Spurgeon. When asked how he came to oppose Sunday opening on the ground that it involved Sunday labour, when he himself worked his horse on that day, Mr. Spurgeon replied, "Oh yes; but my horse is a Jew." In most of the medium-sized towns the step which I advocate has been taken. In Leicester, for instance, the art gallery was opened only this year, and the success has far surpassed the expectations of even its most sanguine promoters. On January 15th, between the hours of 2 and 5 o'clock, over 3,000 working men and their wives visited the Gallery; and it is rather a curious think that the Member for Leicester is opposing Sunday opening in London when in the town he represents that step has been attended with conspicuous success. In our movement, happily, there are no steps backward. Those who have signed this memorandum are not very correct. They say:—

> "The Galleries at Worcester, Chester, Maidstone, Wolverhampton, and Stoke-on-Trent, opened on Sunday in recent years, have all been closed, an evidence of inutility or of evils attending them on that day."

I have had time to test this statement, in one case, and I find that it is absolutely untrue. I have a letter here from Mr. Quick, Secretary to the Municipal Art Gallery and Museum, Wolverhampton, and he says:—

> "In answer to your letter of the 13th inst., the opening of the above on Sunday afternoons has proved a success. It was first tried as an experiment in June, 1888. The total attendance for the 21 occasions during which the building was opened was 8,512, or an average of 405 per Sunday afternoon from 2 to 5. Last year the Gallery was open 51 Sundays (from 2 to 5) with an attendance of 16,372, showing an average of 321. The daily average attendance being 316 (open from 10 to 4; 5; 6, 7; and 8, according to the season). The Gallery is now open every Sunday afternoon. Winter months, 2 to 4, October to March; Summer months, 2 to 5."

So much for the statement of the gentlemen who have issued this memorandum. The only instance I have been able to find of a Local Authority retracing its steps after once adopting the principle for which I am pleading is that of West Bromwich where the public bath was closed for a season because one councillor—

> "Considered that Sunday bathing interfered with the sanctity of the Sabbath and was exceedingly improper and unwise."

I do not know whether the hon. Baronet would go so far as to say that washing on the Sabbath is a violation of the sanctity of that day. There are 18 free public libraries in London, which are subject to a popular vote, and 12 out of the 18 are now opened on Sunday, the last being that of Clerkenwell. At Chelsea the number of people visiting the Public Library in 1890 was 19,944, whereas in 1889 the number was 14,390. I attended a meeting in Chelsea on the subject quite lately, and the rector moved the first resolution in favour of Sunday opening. An attempt has been made to get up an agitation against the liberal policy of the trustees in opening the People's Palace on the Sunday, but it has ignominiously failed, and the Palace is kept open. An author with whose writings we are all familiar, and who has done so much for the people in this matter, Mr. Walter Besant, says—

> "There is no more beautiful, no more *religious* sight in London than that of the 2,000 earnest men and women who gather together on the Sunday morning, between Church and dinner, if they have gone to Church to hear the Organ Recital. There is nothing which more vexes the soul of the publican than to think of these men kept away from his drinking bar by sweet and holy music. Yes! There is one sight more beautiful still. It is the sight of the 2,000 people who throng the library on Sunday evening. They are quiet; they enjoy warmth and light; they are in the best of company; they are filling their minds with noble thoughts. Instead of this, those who do not blush to sign a document against Sunday opening in the name of what they call religion, would send them out—what to do? To tramp the streets, to find in crowded bars shelter from rain and cold, to swell the ranks of the fallen, and to subject the young men to temptation. In the sacred name of Religion! Is it possible?"

These are the words of a man who speaks from experience of London, and who knows what he is talking about. Then, there is no clergyman who has done more for the working classes of the East End than the Rev. S. A. Barnett, Vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel. He says—

> "We have opened a picture gallery every Easter on Sundays; we have now a Free Library which is always open on that day. My experience is that those who come on Sundays come with a more serious intention; they wear their best clothes and they have more leisure. As a consequence, they look at pictures to learn, and they take up books to study. There has never been any difficulty about order, and the number of people who use the place, is much greater than on other days."

I believe that in the whole of London there is only one Art Gallery which is open all the year round, and that is the London Art Gallery. Mr. Rossiter who for many years managed that says—

> "Our attendance on Sundays has always been very much greater than on any other day, often as large as the other days of the week put together."

The National Sunday League has been the means of securing to the working classes admission to many of the best private collections. The Duke of Westminster has been kind enough to open Grosvenor House on Sunday afternoons to the League, and last year there were no fewer than 10,000 applicants for admission. On one day 5,000 were taken through in four hours, and the Staff employed to keep them in order consisted of four persons, while only two are found necessary to keep watch and ward over the rooms of the Royal Society of British Artists, which 2,500 visitors passed through. The Trustees and officers of our Museums and Picture Galleries are on our side. My right hon. Friend (Sir J. Lubbock) will speak for the British Museum, and the majority of the Trustees are anxious to throw it open on the Sunday. The Trustees of the South Kensington Museum take exactly the same view. But it is not only the Trustees, the officers are ready to do the work for nothing, because they have their heart in it. Only a few nights ago two officers of the South Kensington Museum assured me that the whole of their Staff were most anxious to have the Museum opened on the Sunday, and would volunteer to attend. Professor Flower speaking for the Natural History Museum says—

> "I am glad to say that the majority of the Trustees are in favour of opening it on Sunday afternoons, and three-fourths, at least, of the Staff are also in favour of such opening. Many of them are so enthusiastic as to say that they are willing to come and take their turn at attending, even without remuneration. I do not think we should act on that principle, but even if we did, the work would be extremely light. But these men would not be expected to sweep and clean, to stuff birds, to arrange tablets, or write labels, or do any of the real work we expect of them on week days; they would only have to walk the Museum; walk or stand about there a few hours, and then walk back again. Probably if they were not doing this, they would be taking a walk somewhere else, so that they would not be working any harder than usual. And out of our whole Staff only a few need come, so that the turn would only fall upon each man perhaps once in every six or eight Sundays, and we should never ask anyone to come if he had any conscientious objections to do so. We have calculated that the cost of opening every Sunday in the year would probably amount to something under £300 a year, a trifle compared with the cost of the whole Museum, and even as compared with what the evening opening would come to. I therefore, think that Sunday opening would be, on the whole, a greater advantage even than the evening opening, because instead of being tired with their day's work, people would be in a fitter frame of mind and body to look at the beautiful instructing and elevating objects to be seen in a place like the Natural History Museum."

I cannot help thinking that much of the outcry against Sunday labour is but a pretence, and the cloak of prejudice. Hon. Gentlemen who raised it know very well that they enjoy very good dinners on Sunday, which are cooked by Sunday labour, and that they look upon the Monday edition of their morning paper as a necessity of their daily life. Knowing something about the domestic economy of a newspaper office, I may tell the House that there is far more Sunday labour required to produce Monday's paper than would be required if all the national collections in London were open on Sunday. There is even Sunday labour required in every church and chapel that is open for religious service. I do not say that that labour is not well spent, but every one knows that it is employed, and yet our opponents say that no one should work more than six days a week. If necessary I can produce volunteers who on Sundays throughout the whole year will do the work of the regular enstodians of these institutions and museums and art galleries. One of the vice-presidents of the National Sunday League has offered a large sum of money in order that the experiment may be tried throughout the year. Of course, whatever you do in this matter you will be accused of introducing the thin end of the wedge of Sunday desecration. It is said that the opening of factories and workshops will be the result of opening museums on Sundays. In Manchester and Birmingham the museums have been open for twenty years, and where is the factory or the workshop found going on a Sunday. It is quite true that in France there is a certain amount of Sunday labour, but I am happy to think that it is diminishing year by year, and no doubt a very excellent result will be experienced from the Berlin Conference. M. Yves Guyot, the French Minister of Public Works, in writing the other day, said—

> "The desire for rest from ordinary work on Sunday is increasing in France, but there is not a single Frenchman, so far as I know, who desires to close the museums and galleries on Sunday."

We are all in favour of shorter hours of labour. Some think that object can only be obtained by legislation, others by voluntary effort. But if the working classes are to have shorter hours, what we ought to do is to teach them how to use their leisure properly, and to the best advantage. It is said that Sunday opening will lead to Sunday drinking. Will the hon. Baronet answer me whether that is the case in Dublin. Sunday closing, one distinguished author says, is a result of the infamous alliance between the puritan and the publican. There can be no question that on a wet and foggy Sunday in London a man or woman, if without the warmth of a good home, has to shiver at the street corner, or seek the shelter of the public house. There is another alternative, and it is that which has been afforded to working men in Dublin and various large towns in the United Kingdom. It is the Metropolis which, by some inconsistency I cannot understand, is discarded. The last argument is, that this movement would lead to the opening of theatres. I will read what is said by the most eminent of English actors—my friend Mr. Henry Irving—

> "I fear that want of due consideration of this mechanical aspect leads some persons to believe—and many more to pretend, for other purposes, that they believe—that if museums and picture galleries were to be opened on Sunday, the next step would be to open the theatres. If anyone is so foolish as to believe or to argue any such point, you can easily show that there is no analogy whatever between theatres and museums, &c. A theatre is a workshop on a large scale—why, in the Lyceum we employ daily some hundreds of people, varying between 300 and 500 with the play. These people are all workers, and six days work is quite enough for them, as it is for anyone. It is not possible to vary the workers, except, perhaps, here and there, in the merest labouring department. The same work, to be properly done, must be done by the same people, and it could not be practically possible to employ fresh hands. Besides, the actors themselves would be the first to resent any encroachment on their day of rest—in fact, six performances a week are quite enough for all, and where excessive work is attempted, there is very often a lamentable result. For many reasons there is no fear of any system of opening theatres on Sundays creeping in or obtaining a footing here. In Western America, where it is sometimes practised, it is rapidly coming to an end. If I had any power with those in high places, I would say: 'For God's sake, let a little life and a little light into the dead and dark places of our cities, and give our toilers a chance of learning and enjoying something beyond and above the sordid routine of their lives.'"

Mr. Bancroft writes similarly—

> "I am thoroughly in favour of the opening of picture galleries and museums on Sundays, that those whose work allows them no other chance, may see their treasures; but it is altogether a different case, in my humble opinion, with regard to theatres, and I do not think I know a single English actor who would like to see them open on Sundays."

Only this evening Mr. H. A. Jones. the playwright, wrote that it is an impossibility. The clergy are taking a very different view about Sunday opening from what they did formerly. They see that men cannot be taken by the scruff of the neck and pitched into church or chapel, and rather than see them in the public house they would see them in the museums and art galleries. The Bishop of Chester is prominent among those who have lately spoken—

> "But the Lord's Day, in its proper nature, is a day of holy mirth and refreshment, of gladsome worship and honest enjoyment, of family reunion and sober hospitality. The day of rest and refreshment, as well as of worship and religious instruction, has for multitudes become a day of sluggish and wearisome inactivity, and those 'filthy tipplings,' which the famous *Book of Sports* anticipated as one of the results of Sabbatarianism, have become scandalously and perniciously common. At the root of sound practice there must always be sound theory. Let us frankly recognise and utilise whatever germs of right there are in the present movement."

Not only the Bishop of Chester, but the Archbishop of York, too, has spoken in a very liberal way. Throughout the Metropolis, the best and most enlightened of the clergy—the Vicar of Bethnal Green, the Vicar of Chelsea, and others, known for their devotion to the ministry of the Church—are in favour of the movement. It is a libel on religion to say that places of worship would suffer by the opening of the museums and art galleries on Sunday. I would observe that the hon. Baronet, if he pushed his argument to a logical conclusion, would adopt the Scotch idea of Sabbatarianism, which formerly prevented any form of recreation on Sunday—

> "In 1647 punishment was ordered, according to the Minutes of the Fife Synod, of 'whoever was guilty of sitting or walking idle upon the streets or fieldes on Sunday.' In 1742, according to an old book, 'sitting idle at their doors was profane.'"

Buckle says—

> "It was a sin to visit your friends on Sunday; it was sinful either to have your garden watered or your beard shaved. No one, on Sunday, should pay attention to his health or think of his body at all."

Better it would seem that a man should

steal on Saturday than that he should smile on Sunday. I heard of a curious case not very long ago. An English traveller in Scotland on the Sunday morning sat at the window of his lodging smoking his pipe. A policeman, after passing several times, was so struck by what to him was the gross indecency of smoking on the Sabbath that he said, "Man, I'm sorry that a' canna' lock ye up." But that is consistent, and topical Sabbatarianism. I cannot appreciate that unequal and partial Sabbatarianism which closes the museums and libraries and opens the public houses. I cannot even give credit for honesty of purpose to those who open Hampton Court and close the gallery at Bethnal Green. It seems to me on a par with the selfishness of congregations in the North and West of England, who, with the museums and galleries open in their own large towns, are unwilling to allow to others the advantages which they themselves are incapable of enjoying. It is time that London should think and speak for itself. We claim the right of local option, and nobody can deny that London has spoken out its mind. The London County Council has voted almost unanimously in favour of Sunday opening, and has petitioned the House accordingly. The London Trades Council are unanimous to a man. A canvass of the trades shows a majority of two to one in the same sense. The stonemasons, to whom my hon. Friend the Member for West Nottingham belongs, decided by an immense majority in favour of Sunday opening. Nearly every one of the free libraries is open on Sunday. I would ask the right hon. Gentleman the First Lord what further evidence he requires as to London opinion? I do not see why we need to be protected from ourselves, "our blood be on our own head." If London is to be made the hot-bed of vice and crime, to be demoralised by Sunday opening, we are quite willing to take the responsibility. Life in London is sufficiently mean and monotonous—not in the West-end, of Church parade and Show Sundays, but in Bethnal Green and Whitechapel; and I think it would be a very great thing if this House could, by a small exercise of its power, do something to brighten the homes and refine the tastes of working men by lifting their minds to higher and nobler things than the sordid realities of their everyday experience. I do not know why this House should teach the working men that the Sunday is to be one interminable round of intolerable dulness. Charles Dickens wrote a very eloquent preface to one of his books, in which the refrain of the story was that in London on Sunday a man had nothing to turn to but "streets, streets, streets." The Parks are open on Sundays, but what are they but playgrounds? Why should we shut against the working men and trading classes the covered playgrounds or public resorts to be found in the museums, libraries, and art galleries? We ask in our foggy weather and dismal surroundings for "light and yet more light," and I do hope, Mr. Speaker, that the House will do something to grant our petition, and to free itself from the reproach of favouritism and inconsistency, in that it gives Sunday opening where the need is small, and refuses it where the need is great, in face of what has now become the united opinion of the Metropolis.

Amendment proposed,

To leave out from the word "That," to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "in the opinion of this House, it is expedient to open those National Museums and Galleries that are now closed in London to the public on Sunday for certain hours and under special regulations."—(*Mr. Lawson.*)

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(10.43.) SIR R. FOWLER (London): The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has made a very eloquent speech in favour of his Motion, and has stated that the City Council is unanimously in favour of Sunday opening?

*MR. LAWSON: Practically unanimous—60 to 7.

*SIR R. FOWLER: 60 to 7?

*MR. LAWSON: Something like that.

*SIR R. FOWLER: At all events, I do not admit that the County Council is returned to deal with this question, and this is an illustration of the circumstance that the County Council is disposed to interfere with everything except its own business. But what is the opinion of Metropolitan Members who are returned with reference to this subject? I shall be very much surprised if the hon. Member takes the majority of them into the Lobby with him. The hon. Member referred to the hon. Member for Whitechapel, who, however, I do not see in his place.

*MR. LAWSON: I did not refer to the hon. Gentleman at all. From his religion he has thought it better to remain neuter, though in favour of the Motion.

*SIR R. FOWLER: The hon. Member's reference indicated that the hon. Gentleman generally assented. The hon. Member for Whitechapel (Mr. Montagu) belongs to a community that has been distinguished by the observance of their own Sabbath, in which respect they set us a great example, and can scarcely ignore in this case the principle on which that observance is founded. The hon. Member began his speech by telling us that the House has become more enlightened. Well, for my own part, I do not wish to be enlightened in this respect. I think the Sabbath is a great blessing to the people of the world. I believe it is an institution which God, in His wisdom and mercy, gave to man, and as such I defend it. I, for one, will enter my humble protest against any attempt to desecrate the Sabbath.

*(10.48.) MR. M'ARTHUR (Leicester): I rise to second the Amendment of my hon. Friend opposite, and to oppose the Motion of my hon. Friend the Member for St. Pancras, believing, as I do, that the policy recommended for our adoption would be injurious to the public interest, would be especially injurious to the interest of artisans, the working classes, and the poor. Sir, I give the hon. Mover and Seconder of the Resolution full credit for pure motives and good intentions. I doubt not they honestly believe that to open our national museums, picture galleries, and other institutions on Sunday would be an advantage, and that it would not injuriously affect the proper observance of our English Sunday, which I regard as one of the greatest blessings and safeguards of the nation, and the loss of which I would deprecate as one of the greatest calamities that could befal us as a people. Sir, I am aware there are many well-meaning Christian men who are in favour of the Motion, because they imagine that the opening of such places on Sunday would lessen the evil of intemperance and help to wean men from the public houses. But I confess I fear the great majority of the public, who agitate for the opening of our national institutions on Sunday, are either men who have no sympathy with the Christian duties, privileges, or moral and religious advantages of the day, or men who ignore or deny the moral obligation of Sunday, and would sooner abolish it altogether. I recollect some time ago reading of a clergyman travelling by rail, who, when stopping at one of the stations, observed a man distributing infidel publications, and ventured to remonstrate with him for doing so. "I shall never forget," said the clergyman, "the expression of the man's countenance, the tone of his reply, and the vehemence of his manner when, clenching one hand and striking the other violently against the railway carriage, he exclaimed, 'There is no revolutionising this country so long as it is guarded by Christianity.'" Sir, I believe the statement is perfectly correct, and I wish to remind the House that, with all our faults and failings, we are a Christian nation, that Christianity has made us what we are, that Sunday and Christianity are inseparably connected, and that if we destroy the one we shall soon have little of the other left that is worthy of the name. Much might be said on this aspect of the question, and I am far from regarding it as unimportant; but I do not wish to originate a theological discussion, or to argue the question from a purely religious standpoint. Sir, those who support this Motion profess to be pre-eminently the friends of the working classes, to whom they think the change advocated would be a great boon. Well, Sir, it is true that the proper observance of Sunday is important to all classes; but this is undoubtedly a working man's question, for any change that takes place in the direction recommended to us by the supporters of the Motion will affect working men more directly, more seriously, and more injuriously than any other class, and it is because I believe the change proposed would not be beneficial to the working classes, but would

be highly injurious to their truest and best interests, that I oppose the Motion. Sir, one of the most frequently-adopted arguments in favour of opening our national institutions on Sunday is that it would promote temperance, and that many who now go to public houses would be induced to forsake them and spend their time in our museums and picture galleries. This I do not believe would be the case, nor do I believe it would be the means of reclaiming a single drunkard, or of preventing a single man from becoming a drunkard. Indeed, my strong conviction is it would be more likely to have the contrary effect, and would greatly increase the consumption of alcoholic drinks, for we would be compelled to establish numerous refreshment bars, where even women and children would be exposed to greater temptation than in public houses, which many of them would not enter. You would also largely increase the number and the labour of those whose life is one weary round of incessant toil, and lessen the number of those who can now "smile when the Suuday appears," because they know that that is their day, on which they can call their time their own, and have some social and domestic enjoyment. We hold, therefore, that everything which unnecessarily increases Sunday labour is a direct injury to those who have to toil for their daily bread. Sir, I am aware we are told that the increased work rendered necessary by opening national institutions in London would be infinitesimally small. We may reply that, compared with the vast population of this great Metropolis, the number of those who could or would attend such places would also be infinitesimally small. It must also be evident to all who take an interest in the question that there never was a period when it was less necessary to open our State-supported museums than at present. The majority of working men, or at all events a very large number of them, now take Saturday as a holiday, many of them take Monday also, and they are now agitating for an Eight Hours Bill. The parks are open where they can breathe pure air and enjoy healthful exercise; the British Museum, the South Kensington Museum, and the Bethnal Green Museum are now lighted by electricity and open to a reasonable hour at night. It is, therefore, futile to argue that men who wish to visit these places cannot find time to do so except on Sunday. I am disposed to fear, however, that many of those who advocate opening State-supported institutions on Sunday do not care very much whether the number visiting them would be large or small. What they chiefly want is to obtain the sanction of Parliament to break down this Sunday barrier which has so long stood in their way. Sir, we all know there is nothing at present to prevent museums and picture galleries from being opened in all the large towns and cities in the Kingdom if the people and the Corporations wish to have them open. In the Borough of Leicester, of which I have had the honour of being one of its Representatives for nearly 20 years past, there has been great diversity of opinion upon this question. They have at length decided, by the small majority of one, to open their institutions during a portion of Sunday. Whether the experiment will be successful or not is yet to be ascertained. I am informed, however, that after the rush and excitement of the first few Sundays there has been a great falling off in the number of visitors, amounting in some cases to from 50 to 100 per cent. I am also informed that a memorial to the Mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of Leicester, signed by a large number of clergymen, ministers, professional men, manufacturers, and others, has been presented to the Council, stating that a very strong feeling of opposition to Sunday opening exists, and expressing an opinion that the resolution recently passed should be rescinded. But what is the fact with regard to the country at large? Why, that out of 357 museums, public libraries, and art galleries, only 24 or 25 of them are open on Sunday, and at Worcester, Keswick, Stoke-on-Trent, Chester, Maidstone, have been closed after a fair trial, because the effect of having them open was found to be injurious rather than beneficial. But it is doubtless felt by our opponents that if they could only point to London, and say that all our national institutions there are open on Sunday, it would be a powerful argument in favour of opening similar institutions everywhere. It would also encourage the demand for opening other places of amusement when a charge for entrance would be made, which would still further secularise the Sunday and make it a day of both pleasure and business. We are told, however, of the great success that has attended the opening of the Painted Hall at Greenwich, museums at Kew, Hampton Court, and Dublin, and we are asked to express the opinion of this House, that, we presume, in consequence of this success, the time has arrived for extending the policy of Sunday opening to the national institutions in the Metropolis. Well, Sir, if this is to be used as an argument we have only to open billiard rooms, music halls, and dancing saloons on Sunday. It is pretty certain they would be largely attended, and then, after a few years, some hon. Member might move that, seeing the success that has attended the experiment, this House is of opinion that the time has arrived to open our theatres, and indulge in the noble sport of horse racing on Sunday as they do in some continental countries. But, Sir, I think we can prove that opening some of our public institutions on week-day evenings has also proved a great success. We find that at South Kensington Museum, open three days in the week from 10 till 10, the evening attendance during the past year has been upwards of 132,500, and that on Monday evenings especially a large proportion of the visitors belonged to the working classes. And that at Bethnal Green there have been admitted on week-day evenings upwards of 175,600 on week-day evenings. At the British Museum the attendance has not been so satisfactory, but this is easily accounted for. It would seem as if the authorities there had been trying how not to do it. We understand the museum is now open from 8 p.m. to 10. The result is that workingmen, clerks, and others who live at some distance when they go home after work will not turn out again and return at 8. But if the museum were open from 6 to 8 or from 6 to 10 that would be much more convenient and would ensure a much larger attendance than there is or can be under the existing arrangement. Now, Sir, I think, considering these facts, we are fairly entitled to argue that the time has arrived when the other national institutions should be opened at least two or three evenings during the week, and we believe if this were done that it would enable a far larger number of the working classes to visit them than would be at all likely to visit them on Sunday, while it would not be open to the objection of largely increasing Sunday labour, Sunday traffic, and the increased consumption of alchoholic liquors. Sir, the Continental Sunday has frequently been referred to during our Debates on this question. I am aware the Sunday League, or I should rather say the anti-Sunday League, do not relish allusions to it, and I should probably not refer to it again, but I find they give it prominence in one of their printed documents, in which they say—

> "The continental Sunday need claim our attention but briefly. It is pointed to by opponents of Sunday opening as an institution of the worst kind, and it is said that if museums are opened here all the vice, work, and other evils of the continental Sunday will follow. But it must be remembered—firstly, that while no Englishman would care to have the continental Sunday here in its entirety, yet it is by no means so black as it has been painted, and its evils are in many points being remedied. Secondly, its evils are not in any way the result of museums and art galleries being open. Sunday work, Sunday theatres, Sunday drinking, dancing, and pleasures existed long before the museums and art galleries were built."

Sir, the League do not care to have the continental Sunday in its entirety, but as it is "by no means so black as it has been painted" we are disposed to think they would not object to much of it. The evils referred to do exist however, and have existed, we are told, long before museums and art galleries were built. The wonder is, that these valuable institutions have not long since eradicated the evils complained of. They have not done so in France; but if we will only consent to open them in London, they are certain to effect a moral revolution, empty the public houses, and purify society. Will the House permit me to read a short extract from a German paper to show what a purifying influence the Continental Sunday exerts there? The writer, after referring to our English Sunday, observes—

> "We Germans and Schleswig-Holsteiners, not the least, are to a great extent far removed from such a celebration of Sunday. The day of rest and of the most elevated joy is too often robbed of its honour. The forenoon of Sunday is given up to work, and the afternoon to pleasure. That which can elevate man is often despised; but that which degrades him is sought after. On Sunday children cause the greatest anxiety, and servants the greatest annoyance. On Sunday evenings, above all other days, does the wife anticipate the return of her husband with a foreboding heart. Drunkenness and riotousness celebrate their triumphs on Sunday; and most of the misdemeanours are committed on that day, or are intimately connected with the misuse of it. We turn, therefore, to our own people with the urgent request that they would, in their various spheres, endeavour to procure for the Sunday a more honourable observance in our land. If the Sunday acquires a different character, the national life will rest upon surer basis. Wilhelm von Humboldt justly said that the future of our nation depended upon the observance of Sunday. The Sunday question is not that of a party, but the common cause of all who have the good of the people at heart. Not merely the Church, but the State and the family as well, must demand and promote a right observance of Sunday."

Again, Sir, the Sunday League informs us that, although the continental Sunday is "by no means so black as it is painted," its evils are in many points being remedied. Sir, we rejoice to know this is happily true, but we think it will be found the argument tells against the Sunday League. The writer I have just quoted seems not to be aware of the fact that thoughtful men of all continental Churches have been so deeply impressed with the great evil and danger of Sunday desecration, that Lord's Day Rest Associations have been formed and Conferences have been held, at which delegates from almost every country in Europe have attended. Resolutions have been passed in favour of a better observance of Sunday, and in many places there is a marked improvement, or, in the words of the League, "its evils are in many points being remedied." Speaking at a Sunday observance meeting in Geneva some time ago Father Hyacinth, of Paris, concluding a powerful address, is reported to have said—

> "And yet this is the day which certain friends of the people wish to extort from them, false friends that cheat them with the name of liberty, thinking only of their bodily needs, and not wisely even of these."

Allow me to give you one other illustration of the truth of what I have stated respecting the reaction in France in favour of Sunday observance. I had a letter some time ago from a friend who was visiting Cherbourg, in which he writes—

> "Let me tell you a fact which may be interesting to you. On entering the principal church, the Church of the Holy Trinity, we were surprised to find a placard just at the entrance announcing that a Mass was celebrated there every Saturday to deprecate the Divine vengeance on France for the desecration of the Sabbath."

Sir, we think it is much to be regretted that while good men on the Continent are anxious to remedy the evils from which they are suffering, by endeavouring to bring about a better observance of Sunday, there are those in this country who try to persuade us that what has been injurious in France would benefit the working men of London. May we not also reasonably ask what great benefit the working men of Paris have derived from all the Sunday Exhibitions open to them? Is it not a fact that they are hard at work on Sundays and cannot see those exhibitions, even if inclined to see them? Can they compare favourably with the working men of London in any respect? And is it not a fact that the incessant toil which most of them undergo, in consequence of having no day of rest, has exerted an injurious influence upon them mentally and physically, reduced the stamina of the nation and the increase of the population? Is it, then, wise for us to imitate such an example? Sir, as I have already said, members of the Sunday League profess great sympathy with working men and an earnest desire to befriend them. Well, Sir, we have it on the highest authority that "By their fruits you shall know them." And, judged by this rule, I fear many of them, if weighed in the balance, would be found wanting, and that working men may well pray to be saved from their so-called friends whose sympathies frequently extend very little beyond—

> "Be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body."

Of course, there are many honourable exceptions. As I have already intimated, there are Christian men who, under what I regard as a mistaken idea, are in favour of Sunday opening, who generously support our various charities. But we have upwards of 1,000 charitable and benevolent institutions in London; and if we take the trouble to look at their Reports, I believe it will be found that an overwhelming majority of their subscribers are men who not only enjoy the rest of Sunday themselves, but who wish to preserve it to the working classes as one of the greatest boons and blessings they enjoy. Again, if we endeavour to ascertain who are the men who devote most time and energy to promote the best interests of the poor, and of the working classes, I do not think we shall find it is those who clamour most for Sunday opening of museums, picture galleries, and places of amusement. Was there ever a man in this or any other country who, during a long and active life, did more for suffering humanity, or who succeeded in securing so much useful legislation for the relief of the toiling millions of our factory women and children, for our ragged-school children, for costermongers, and for the poor generally than that truly noble, great, and good man the Earl of Shaftesbury, whose name is still a household word, and who, to the last day of his life, strongly opposed Sunday opening of museums and similar places, on the ground that such a step would be highly injurious to the best interests of those for whom he had, for upwards of half a century, laboured so faithfully and so successfully. Speaking on the Sunday opening question, at a large meeting in Exeter Hall, not long before his death, Lord Shaftesbury said—

> "The Lord's Day is one of the greatest boons ever given by God to man. It is absolutely necessary to enable him to bear the wear and tear of six days' work. In these times of pressure and hurry, it is only through the institution and observance of the Sabbath that the mass of the people can enter into the full enjoyment of that great and blessed gift of God to man—domestic happiness."

The late Lord Beaconsfield, who invariably voted against Sunday opening, said during one of the Debates on the question—

> "Of all divine institutions, the most divine is that which secures a day of rest for man—it is the corner-stone of civilisation, and its removal might even affect the health of the people. The opening of museums on Sunday asked for is a great change, and those who suppose for a moment that it could be limited to the proposal of the noble Baron will find they are mistaken."

Mr. Speaker, I might give scores of quotations of a similar character from both dead and living statesmen, including your illustrious father, but I am unwilling to trespass too long on the time and patience of the House. I hope, however, hon. Members will bear with me for a few minutes longer, and allow me to give one or two short extracts from speeches and letters by working men. One of them, after referring to opening institutions on Sunday, observes—

> "Speaking now as a working man, I think it safer to remain as we are. I do not find the restrictions of the Sunday so very rigorous. I can do much as I please; I can stay at home or go abroad; keep sober or get drunk; dig my garden or range the fields; attend a place of worship or go a ratting; study the sciences or read my Bible; and if none of these will satisfy I can, for sixpence, buy all the news of the week. But, say my opponents, the museums are closed, and we cannot enjoy ourselves unless they are open, not on six days only but on the seventh also. I hold the Sabbath as a Divine ordinance—not subject to any abrogation by any human authority. On this day, as now kept, I feel myself a man; during it I can enjoy quiet hours, not subject, so far as trade is concerned, to the commands of any one."

and he concludes by saying—

> "If ever our present Sunday and its form of observance be done away with, it will be to old England a day of mourning, lamentation, and woe. In conclusion, let me say I love museums as much as any of their warmest advocates, but rather than give up my Sunday, let them sink into those primary rocks from which some portion of them came."

Another writes—

> "As a toiler during six days of the week, I feel the relaxation of Sunday simply life itself, therefore if anyone infringes upon my privileges let him be assured of my earnest hostility. But if my liberty in this respect can only be obtained by robbing someone else of the same right, I scorn to seek it at such a price. Relaxation I must have, but I do not think I could best accomplish my purpose by exchanging the din of the workshop for the crush of the excursion train. The question is one for the working classes. If the thin end of the wedge only tickles the fancy and gives pleasure, let us beware lest workshops and factories follow in the wake, and we get seven days' work for six days' wages. On these grounds alone, I believe the man who encourages Sunday labour is the foe of the toiling multitude."

Sir, these are striking testimonies from working men, who, in my opinion, take a perfectly correct view of the question, and I believe they are the views entertained by the vast majority of working men who seriously reflect upon the subject. Allow me to say, in conclusion, that while I give those who are in favour of the Motion credit for pure motives, I believe if they would allow their sympathies to go out in a different direction towards those who now labour 14 to 16 hours a day, and who seldom have a Sunday's rest; if they would endeavour to ameliorate the condition of the enormous number of men who toil incessantly seven days a week, instead of trying to largely increase the number; if they would help to break off the heavy burdens and bid the oppressed go free; I believe they might with greater propriety claim to be the friends of the working classes, and I am quite certain they would best promote the good order, peace, comfort, prosperity, and happiness of the masses of our fellow-countrymen who have to earn their bread by the sweat of their brow.

*(11.20.) MR. NORRIS (Tower Hamlets, Limehouse): This is a very important and difficult subject to deal with; but, so far as I know it, I believe the feeling of the people of London to be decidedly against the opening of museums and galleries on Sundays. It was stated just now that consent had been given to the opening of the Botanic Gardens at Edinburgh — but these gardens scarcely come within the category of museums and galleries.

*MR. LAWSON: There is a museum in the gardens.

*MR. NORRIS: It appears to me that the better class of working men like to spend their Sundays in the open air, and, as it were, to receive sermons in stones. The hon. Member for St. Pancras referred to the fact that the People's Palace, of which I am a Trustee, is open on Sundays, and I believe I was the only man who protested against it being open except for the performance of sacred music. It appears to me that the consensus of opinion is against Sunday opening. Let me quote some opinions which have been uttered on the subject. Lord Beaconsfield, in 1879, voted against Sunday opening, and in his speech he said—

"Of all divine institutions the most divine is that which secures a day of rest for man. I hold it to be the most valuable blessing ever conceded to man. It is the corner-stone of civilization, and its removal might even affect the health of the people. It (the opening of museums on Sundays) is a great change, and those who suppose for a moment it could be limited to the proposal of the noble Baron to open museums will find they are mistaken."

I will venture next to quote an opinion which will weigh perhaps more than any other with hon. Members opposite. In 1869, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian said—

"The religious observance of Sunday is a main prop of the religious character of the country. . . From a moral, social and physical point of view the observance of Sunday is a duty of absolute consequence."

In a letter dated the 13th January, 1876, the right hon. Gentleman said—

"Believing in the authority of the Lord's Day as a religious institution, I must, as a matter of course, desire the recognition of it by others. But over and above this I have myself, in the course of a laborious life, signally experienced both its mental and its physical benefits—I can hardly overstate its value in this view—and for the interest of the working men of this country, alike in these and in other yet higher respects, there is nothing I more anxiously desire than that they should more and more highly appreciate the Christian day of rest."

I myself prefer to take these higher and nobler views as to the sanctity of the day—our day of rest, our English Sunday, and these are views which I believe are shared by working men, and, therefore, it is that I had proposed to move an Amendment setting forth that—

"It is inexpedient to impose labour upon those who must necessarily be employed if museums and galleries were opened on Sundays, and who are at present exempt from work upon that day."

But by the Rules of the House I am precluded from moving the Amendment. In the Tower Hamlets, a Division of which I represent, there is a great preponderance of opinion against the proposal to open museums and galleries on Sunday. No fewer than 20,240 of the working classes there signed protests against Sunday opening of the library and news rooms of the People's Palace. The opinion of the House to the same effect has been expressed on several occasions by very large majorities. In 1855, 48 were for and 237 against

Sunday closing; in 1856, the figures were 48 for, 376 against; in 1874, 70 for, 273 against; in 1877, 87 for, 229 against; and in 1882, 83 for, and 208 against. No doubt Sunday opening would lead to an increase of the Sunday labour. It is not only those actually employed in the care of these institutions who would suffer if they are opened as proposed, but railway servants, men in charge of omnibuses and tram-cars, and others will suffer also. I hope the House will come to the conclusion and show by a large majority that the Motion of my hon. Friend opposite is not for the public good or the welfare of the people, and one the adoption of which is not desired by the working classes. I shall give it my most unqualified opposition.

*(11.28.) SIR J. LUBBOCK (London University): I think that the House will perhaps expect me to say a few words with reference to this Motion, as a Trustee of the British Museum. With reference to the results of the evening opening of the Museum, I do not take quite so gloomy a view as the hon. Member for St. Pancras. The number of people attending is now slightly on the increase, and we hope will continue to increase. Undoubtedly, however, the figures are very disappointing. The hon. Member for Leicester seems to think that is the fault of the Trustees; he says we are showing how best not to do it; he suggests the best hours for the evening would be from 6 to 8. We, however, have tried opening as he suggests, but we found that from 7 to 8 scarcely any one was present. With regard to Sundays, a large majority of the Trustees of the British Museum are anxious to open the Museum on Sunday. We cordially sympathise with everything that has been said as to the proper observance of Sunday, but we wish to open the museums because we believe that to do so will promote the object we all have at heart. What is the object of a museum? Why does the House annually vote large supplies for the support of the British Museum? Partly, no doubt, to promote scientific study, but it is also largely to raise and improve the mental condition of the people. If the British Museum is an ennobling institution for six days in the week, why should it have a desecrating influence on the seventh? The hon. Member who has just sat down, said he was in favour of the people finding sermons in stones; but where will this be better done than in the British Museum? The hon. Member for Leicester is a strong Home Ruler, and wishes to give weight to local opinion; nevertheless, the hon. Member wishes to deny the people of London a privilege which his own people have. I maintain there are much stronger reasons for opening the Metropolitan museums on Sunday than those of provincial towns, because in London it is so much more difficult for our people to get into the country and enjoy the fields and woods. It is quite true the parks are open on Sunday, and we have been told this evening they are themselves a kind of museum. The parks may, no doubt, be regarded as museums of living plants. How inconsistent it is, then, to express delight at the idea of people looking at the living plants, and to regard it as wicked for them to look at the same plants when they are dry. If there is a greater inconsistency than this it is that those who oppose the opening of the London museums are in favour of opening Hampton Court and the museums at Kew on Sunday, though a railway journey has to be undertaken to reach them. The Church shows what is its opinion of the best mode of keeping the Sunday by appointing two services, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. It is obvious that it would be impossible for any one to keep fixed their attention on a service which was carried on continuously during the day. The question then is, what are the people to do during the time when service is not proceeding? You tell us it is quite right to keep the public houses open, that the people should have an opportunity of going to the public house; but yet my hon. Friend the Member for the Tower Hamlets (Mr. Norris) says if you open museums and the people go there they will get drunk. What an extraordinary argument that is. Surely if they get

drunk at all it will be in the public houses, and not in the museums. One word as to the question of money payment. It is very easy to draw the line between places which are kept open for the purposes of profit and those maintained by the nation for the improvement of the people, which are now open during the six days when people are working and closed during the only day of the week on which they have holiday. My hon. Friend the Member for Leicester says we have a half-holiday on Saturday in London. If he knew as much about London as he does of Leicester he would know very well that in the poorer districts of London Saturday is no half-holiday at all; but, on the contrary, many shopkeepers and their assistants have on Saturday to do two days work rolled into one. I do not wish to do anything to encourage Sunday labour; but I think that by opening the museums Sunday labour will be actually diminished. As to the superintendence of the museums, thousands of persons may pass through them and only demand the presence of a mere handful of officials. The few police required in the museums would set free a larger number now employed elsewhere. Because I believe that this step will tend to improve and raise the character of the people of London, to brighten their lives, and to promote the better observance of Sunday, I shall vote for the Motion of my hon. Friend.

*(11.38.) ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I wish to give support from this side of the House to the Motion of the hon. Member (Mr. Lawson). We have been told by the hon. Baronet the Member for the City (Sir R. Fowler) he wishes to prevent the desecration of the Sabbath. So do I, and so, I presume, do all hon. Members. The hon. Member for Limehouse (Mr. Norris), who told us he was on the Trust of the People's Palace, said he wished to have sacred music only played on Sunday, but we have found there has been great benefit to the poor people from music, whether sacred or otherwise, which has been played in the parks. No case has been made out against the Motion, so far as I can see. The hon. Member for Leicester said that we who are opposed to him have little sympathy for the Sabbath, that there was no time when such a change was less necessary than the present, that we live in a Christian country, and he added that the stamina of the French, and the decrease of the population in that country, is due to having galleries open on Sunday. But the hon. Gentleman offered us no proofs. This question ought to be lifted out of a disputation about mere petty details as to railway journeys, and the employment of officials, to the higher ground of consideration whether the change will do good to those less fortunately situated than ourselves. Hon. Gentlemen do not propose to shut up their clubs on the Sunday, or to put an end to Sunday visits to the studios—an ordinary Sunday afternoon occupation during the season. What have poor people to do on Sunday? I look in vain for an answer from those Gentlemen who sit opposite, and who claim to represent the majority in the Principality. They are, no doubt, exhausted by their labours on the Tithes and Sunday Closing Bills, for to-night they are conspicuous by their absence. Are they afraid to speak? They wish to close public houses on Sunday. Where do they wish the poor people to go on Sunday? Will they provide no relaxation and no enlightenment of any kind for those who have not the opportunities they have themselves? I think this Motion is a most natural and evident corollary to the Bill which was read a second time the other day, through the efforts of hon. Gentlemen opposite from Wales, for closing public houses on the Sunday. If the public houses to which the people have been in the habit of going on Sunday are to be closed, some other places must in reason be opened to them; and where can they go better than to places where they will see the highest efforts of the art and genius of all countries in the world? The mere question of a few people being employed in looking after these places on Sunday is nothing to the advantage the hardworking man will gain. Men who work amongst the poor, know that the great difficulty is to get

the poor some places to go to on the Sunday, to draw them away from the public house, to find them something that will lift them above the ordinary every-day level, and out of the misery in which they live. Surely it is not too much to ask hon. Members of this House, who have not the trials and temptations the poor have, to give them a chance of improving themselves. I will not enter into the question of the particular hours during which these places should be opened. Let the hours be adapted to Church hours. Let the hours be from 2 to 5 o'clock; but, at all events, let the experiment be tried. I believe it will be found that there is the greatest desire on the part of the people to see these places open on Sunday. I know I shall be told by Members from the Principality that this is the small end of the wedge. The action of Welsh Liberal Members on the present occasion convinces me that they have received letters similar to those I have received, which are to the effect—"You must not admit the small end of the wedge." But, Sir, as we listen to those hon. Members, upon most of the subjects on which they enlighten us, we find very generally that it is not the small end of the wedge they wish to insert, but the wedge itself, and often another on top of it. I trust the House will not deny to the people of London what has proved of such great advantage in Birmingham, Edinburgh, and other places. Let us ascertain whether the people want Sunday opening by giving it a fair trial.

(11.47.) MR. JESSE COLLINGS (Birmingham, Bordesley), who was greeted with cheers,* said: I suppose that general cheering augurs well for my hon. Friend the Member for St. Pancras, and he and my Friends around me are no doubt heartily glad to hear it and appreciate all it means. There is no doubt a very strong feeling against the proposal contained in the Amendment of the hon. Member (Mr. Lawson)—a feeling founded upon the religious view of the question, and consequently a feeling very difficult to deal with. It must be dealt with, not with any roughness, but with a great deal of patient consideration. I would remind my hon. Friend the Member for Leicester (Mr. A. McArthur) that in the Australian colonies the course the House is now asked to adopt has been adopted for some time without any great calamity resulting. My hon. Friend said that the advocates of this proposal have no sympathy with the Sunday; but I think that the opposite is the case. The desire of those who advocate the proposal is that the Sunday should be spent in a sober, rational, and, I would add, religious manner. It must be borne in mind that no one is required to go to the places which are open; those who object can stay away. I would draw what, in my opinion, is an important distinction between public institutions and places for which a money entrance is charged. Hon. Members who have picture galleries and libraries of their own enjoy those possessions on Sundays. Public libraries belong to no one person, but to the people of the locality or to the nation, and the people are as much co-proprietors of those institutions as hon. Members are of their own libraries and picture galleries. The man who goes to a municipal art gallery is entering his own gallery, for he is rated for it, and it is as much his own as any man's. I do not think, therefore, that we have a right to deprive him of the enjoyment of that institution. No working man can possess a picture gallery or library of his own; he can only hope to obtain them in his corporate capacity, and he is equally entitled to enjoy them. I believe that in this principle of corporate ownership lies the solution of many of the problems that exist between the rich and the poor. But perhaps experience is better than speculation as to what might happen if these institutions were opened on Sundays. I was for many years chairman of the Birmingham Art Galleries, and I was struck when I revisited the city on Sundays, especially in winter, with the depressing aspect of the place. Almost the only place about which there was any light and cheerfulness was the window of the public house. I was so impressed with the desolate appearance of the city on Sunday that I moved a Resolution that our institutions should be opened on Sunday. That Resolution was carried, after much opposition, and for 16 years the people of Birmingham have enjoyed those institutions on Sundays. There is, belonging to the Corporation of Birmingham, a great museum and hall at Aston. The Aston people are reasonable people ; they know what they are about and what is good for them. They are not led away by specious arguments, nor do they allow the real issue to be obscured, and, therefore, they have for all these years had the enjoyment of these institutions and have justified their enjoyment of them by a rational use of them. There was, as I have indicated, a great deal of opposition — sincere opposition — to the movement for Sunday opening, but I believe that most of those who opposed the movement would refrain at the present moment from lifting their hand to close these institutions on Sunday. I used frequently to visit the places when they were open. They were crowded, but the people were orderly, and, in my opinion, they were gaining new ideas and new thoughts, and great good generally. Men and women came with their families, and I have no doubt that each visit would afford rational talk to the family for the whole week. I do not think that the question of labour is a difficult one. In Birmingham we said to each member of the staff that if he volunteered for duty from 2 o'clock on Sunday till the closing time he would have one day's holiday during the week at his choice, and we have never had any difficulty in securing attendants. At first it was thought necessary to have police and others to look after property, but that has been found to be absolutely unnecessary, and to this day, though millions have visited the library and galleries, there has not been a single scratch or any damage done to the whole institution. It has been said that opening these places in the evenings was equivalent to opening them on Sunday afternoons, but I do not think anyone who knows the life of the working man can hold that opinion. The hon. Member for Leicester has asked whether a single drunkard has been reclaimed by this practice of Sunday opening. For my own part, I do not base my claim upon the reclamation of drunkards, but on the common rights of owners of property to have a free and reasonable use of it. I know, however, for a fact that many men who had been habitual frequenters of the public house on Sunday have become frequenters of these institutions since they have been opened on Sundays, and women have come to me and expressed their gratitude on the grounds that their husbands were naturally sober men, but not knowing what to do on Sundays, had gone to the public house, whereas from the time of the opening of the library and galleries on Sunday they had become sober and respectable men. I would ask hon. Members who oppose this Motion in the interest of Sunday, a question with regard to newspapers, which of course mean Sunday labour. We cannot help that, but every man who buys a newspaper on Monday morning becomes to the extent of what he gives for it an encourager of Sunday labour, and to be consistent he should condemn the practice of the Monday morning publication of newspapers. I am afraid we are all a little lenient towards the observance of a principle when it affects our own comfort, but staunch in adherence to a principle when the actions of other people are concerned. My right hon. Friend the Member for London University (Sir John Lubbock) has spoken of the use of these art galleries and literary and scientific institutions, but as a matter of fact these are as a closed book to the mass of the working classes in this country, and only when men are free, only when they are quite at leisure, can these places be of use to them. It is of no use to say that men can give attention to the study of these matters at the close of a day of hard work, but give them the opportunity on a day of leisure, and there is no knowing what value the opportunity will have, and how it may be followed up at home. I will not detain the House longer, but I thought it would be of advantage that I should give the House the benefit of our experience in Birmingham, where the experiment has been so successful that everybody has ceased to raise any question about these institutions being open on Sunday. Those who do not care to go stay away, but the places are well frequented, and likely to remain so. I believe that any hint of a proposal to close these institutions in Birmingham on Sunday would be regarded as one of the most foolish and wicked suggestions that could possibly be made, in the interest of sobriety, morality, and of religion. I am sure that if hon. Members who now feel some apprehension as to the effect of this Sunday opening in London, would try the experiment, they would find their fears were groundless, and that it would tend greatly to the benefit of the people for whose benefit these galleries are maintained. I do not wish to ram this matter down the throats of those who have a different view, but rather, I would, by argument, and almost by entreaty, induce them to give effect to this, which they will admit is the desire of the great majority of the people, and I am sure the experiment will show that none of the anticipated evils which have been alluded to will follow. Our proposal is founded on reason and common sense, and I ask hon. Members to put aside their prejudices and let the people have the means of enjoying privileges which they themselves would not like to be deprived of upon the Sunday.

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* The result of the election for Aston Manor had just become known to the House.

*(12.5.) The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Stuart Wortley, Sheffield, Hallam): I interpose in this Debate for a short time to explain why, although on a former occasion I was one of those who in the ardour of political youth supported this Motion, I do not feel I can do so on the present occasion. Nine years ago when this Motion was discussed in the House I supported it and expressed my conviction that among the working classes, or among a considerable number of them at all events, there was a strong demand for enlightened, and even for artistic recreation on the Sabbath day. In voting against this Motion to-night I by no means abandon that conviction. With regard to the opening of art galleries and museums on Sundays, we ought to pay regard almost solely to the wishes of the working classes in the matter. We have not to please ourselves but the persons who will ultimately feel the effect for good or evil of such a step—I mean our constituents among the humbler classes throughout the great centres of population. It is because the effects will be felt by them that it behoves us to take the greatest care how we use the power that for the time happens to be in our hands. I am aware that the position I take logically amounts to the advocacy of the principle of local option applied to such matters. An appeal has been made to logic and I confess it was most successfully made by the right hon. Baronet (Sir J. Lubbock) who is a master in that line of argument, and if the appeal is made solely to logic, I take a firm stand on that ground as an advocate of local option in these things. But the Motion is not made on that ground. The proposal is that the State should set the example, should lead and not follow, and give an indication of a policy which could not but be interpreted as putting a pressure upon Local Authorities.

*Sir J. LUBBOCK: Does the hon. Gentleman extend that principle to the Trustees of the British Museum?

*Mr. STUART WORTLEY: I cannot regard the Trustees of the British Museum as being entirely independent of the Government of the country. Their action could not but be interpreted as setting an example to be followed by Trustees and other Public Bodies. In supporting the Motion on a previous occasion, I received no sign of approval from those whose virtues we are bound to respect, but rather the contrary; and so far as one can judge in the light of subsequent experience, the opinion of the working-classes, if it sets in any direction, is rather against the proposal. In these days the demand is for a restriction of the hours of labour, and we who think that these proposals for restriction are in themselves most disputable, must, on our part, do nothing which can be construed into an unnecessary extension of those hours of labour. In these days of continually increasing pressure upon the mental and physical resources of the human frame, we ought to be very careful how we act in any direction that may increase that pressure. Because this Motion is not a Motion for local option, but practically one for giving a State direction to Municipalities and Local Authorities——

An hon. MEMBER: Only two institutions.

MR. STUART WORTLEY: Really hon. Members must allow me to place my own interpretation on the Motion which, being placed before the House, is public property. On the grounds I have stated, I cannot vote for the Motion.

(12.10.) MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I have listened with more astonishment than I can express to the speech we have just heard, and pity the hon. Gentleman for the position in which he has foundered himself. He evidently desires—from conscientious reasons no doubt—to go into a different Lobby to that he entered nine years ago and thinks it necessary to give some reasons for the change in his opinions. But let me in a few moments analyse these reasons. The hon. Gentleman believes this is a question for local option, and so he thinks it is wrong for the State to take the lead. Now, that would be a very fine position for the hon. Gentleman to take up if the State had always refrained from taking any action in this direction; but I ask the hon. Gentleman how can he square his theory with the action the State has in many instances adopted? Already there are several public institutions which are not local property, but State property, which are supported out of funds voted by this House, and which are by the consent of the Government open on Sundays. The State has, then, taken the lead, and if my memory serves me rightly the State took the lead before any of these local institutions. The State has taken the lead in the case of public institutions in Dublin, in the case of Hampton Court Palace, Greenwich Hospital, and Kew Gardens. What, then, becomes of the argument of the hon. Gentleman upon which he refuses to support the Motion of my hon. Friend to-night? He says this is a matter for local option and the State must not lead, but the State has taken the lead in reference to these institutions I have mentioned. I hope that unless he can find some other argument he will reconsider his position once more and vote as he has previously voted in favour of the Resolution. Very pertinent was the question put to him by the right hon. Baronet (Sir John Lubbock) whether the Trustees of the British Museum would be allowed to exercise their judgment without State interference. The majority of the Museum Trustees are prepared to take action, but they desire to have an expression of public opinion upon the subject. But how shall the Trustees get an expression of public opinion if not from this House? Why, if public opinion is to govern these matters, does the Government intervene to oppose this Motion? Then, says the hon. Gentleman, there is a strong feeling in favour of shortening hours of labour, and, therefore, he is not prepared to do anything that would tend to extend the hours of labour in any direction. But I ask him does he know anything of the life of the working classes in big towns? Where is the largest amount of Sunday labour? Is it not in those towns and in those trades where there are not healthy recreations and healthy amusements to draw the people from their homes? I have a very fair knowledge of working life in London, not in all trades, but especially in connection with one industry. I am not speaking of large factories, which, of course, are closed on Sundays, I mean work carried on at home, and I say the closing on Sunday of places of enlightened recreation and useful amusement leads to an increase in the hours of labour, for there is no inducement to a man to leave his work. Where you have given greater facilities for enlightened recreation there has been a tendency to shorten the hours of labour. When the right hon. Baronet obtained from Parliament the Bank Holiday Act, that Act applied only to banking establishments, and did not apply to ordinary trades, but see what the result has been.

I remember when that Act first came into force there was a reluctance in all the workshops to make a holiday because the banks did, but go now among the watch-making trades in Clerkenwell, and you will not find one workshop that does not keep St. Lubbock's Day. Indeed, you will find most places of business next week closed from Thursday evening until Tuesday morning. Where is there the increase of labour from giving working men the means of intellectual recreation when they have the leisure for it? The hon. Member for Bordesley has shown how the case of the few attendants on duty on Sunday in Birmingham is met. I do not for a moment think that the opening of museums, art galleries, and libraries will tend to increase hours of labour, but will rather have the contrary effect. I speak from the experience of one who has been through the workshop and knows the wants of men who have worked long hours during the week, and I know we did not thank those who prevented us from going to those places we desired to visit on the only day we could find time to do so. I know what a dismal day a wet winter Sunday in London may be, and why not allow the opportunity of utilising time which cannot be always spent in walking in the parks? I think it is a most lame and impotent reason the Under Secretary has given for his change of view. Is he, are the Government, prepared to give London the same means of deciding by public opinion as the people of Sheffield, Birmingham, Leicester, and other towns have? We have shown how local option is exercised, and I think if we had the opportunity in London we should soon have the opinion of the industrial classes expressed in favour of using these public institutions on Sundays. What have we seen in reference to this Motion to-day? I have followed the presentation of Petitions, and it will be found that those which are against the Resolution are signed by people living in the provinces, away from London, who do not know what London life is among the working classes, who have no interest in the opening of these places on Sunday. On the other hand, there is no mistaking the opinion of those who have signed Petitions in favour of the Resolution. I need only mention the Petition presented by my hon. Friend to-day, which has the signatures of 66,000 inhabitants, most interested in the opening of Bethnal Green Museum on Sunday. I know the gentleman who moved the resolution in the County Council, and if the hon. Baronet opposite desires to know what manner of man Councillor Branch is, he may obtain convincing evidence of his earnest religious character and opinions from any Congregational Minister in Bethnal Green. We have been told of the dire effects that will follow from the opening of these institutions on Sundays, but still the case made out by my hon. Friend in his opening speech remains unanswered. Old arguments have been repeated once again, but not one of the hon. Gentlemen who has spoken against the Motion has attempted to prove that public opinion is not growing in favour of this proposal. Have evil effects resulted from the opening of such places as Hampton Court, Greenwich Hospital, Kew Gardens, and the Botanical Gardens at Edinburgh? I do not think that a proposal to close the public galleries in Dublin would meet with much favour from those who have the religious and intellectual welfare of the people at heart. Are the Government prepared to say that during the coming summer season Hampton Court and Kew Gardens shall be closed on Sundays? Let the Government make the attempt to close these places and see what a hornet's nest they will have about their ears. I speak as knowing the conditions of working class life in the poorer districts of London; and I must say it is rather selfish for hon. Gentlemen who have all the advantages that wealth commands, and who hurry away from the Metropolis on Saturday morning and return here again on Monday, it is selfish for them to deny to the artisan living with his family in two or three rooms the opportunity of breaking the barren monotony of his life by visiting places from which he can derive such artistic and intellectual enjoyment as he is capable of. I understand we are to be outvoted to-night; but everything that has been done to make the life of the working classes brighter and happier has had to be done against such opposition as we have to encounter to-night; and in time I hope the House will take a broader view of this question, and follow the example of another place in which this Motion has been carried on a former occasion. I am sure that in the near future this Resolution will be carried, and if there is no stronger case than that advanced by the Under Secretary for the Home Office, I do not see how it can be resisted.

(12.30.) LORD ELCHO (Ipswich): I desire to say one word in favour of this Motion. An eloquent passage from the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Mid Lothian has been quoted against this Motion. The right hon. Gentleman was in the House at 11 o'clock, but he is not now to be seen. I trust he did not receive any bad news which took him away. It is important that we should know his opinion. The speech quoted was made in 1869 and, judging from experience, we may presume that the opinion stated by the right hon. Gentleman in 1869 is the exact opposite of that held by him in 1891. The hon. Member for the City (Sir R. Fowler) told us that the Sabbath was a divine institution, and I think he took a rather narrow and somewhat bigoted view of the manner in which we are bound to keep the Sabbath according to the Scriptures. I think the only question we have to consider is that of labour, and certainly, if it were proved that any large amount of labour would be entailed by this Sunday opening of museums, I should vote against it. But I think this point has been much exaggerated, and that no more Sunday labour would be required by the opening of museums than is at present required to prepare the Sunday dinners of a few hon. Gentlemen.

*(12.32.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I wish to occupy but a very short period. I am sure everyone will give full credit to those who support this Motion, whether on this side of the House or on the other, for a sincere desire to raise the people by enabling them to pass their Sunday in the best possible way. But, Sir, we have to consider whether in carrying out this desire we, as a Government, are to take upon ourselves the responsibility of directing a number of men to work on Sundays, for what, after all, is not an absolutely necessary object. Men are to be forced to work on Sundays, whether they like it or not, in order, it is said, that the people may obtain recreation. But is this a work of necessity?

*MR. LAWSON: Hampton Court is open on Sundays.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman says that because Hampton Court is open on Sundays all public servants in these institutions are to be compelled to work on Sundays. I do not see that we are compelled to adopt the hon. Gentleman's conclusion, and I do not propose to act upon his recommendation. Hampton Court has been opened on Sunday for a great many years. It may not be desirable that it should be closed, but it does not follow because it is open that we should call upon public servants in every museum and picture gallery to work on Sunday. It may or may not be thought desirable by the public authorities in various localities to open such buildings on Sundays. That is a matter they have to determine for themselves. We are the Representatives of the people of the United Kingdom; we have to lay down rules for the guidance of public servants in different parts of the Kingdom; and we are asked, under these circumstances, to say it is our desire that public servants should not have that rest on Sundays to which I certainly think they are entitled. A great deal has been said with regard to the views of the working men. So far as I have been able to ascertain, there is nothing that working men are more jealous about than their Sunday's rest, and they would certainly regard this as an infringement of their right to Sunday rest after their six days' labour.

I do not believe that they desire these institutions to be opened on Sundays. Reference has been made to theatres, and to the fact that Mr. Henry Irving has expressed himself against the Sunday opening of theatres, because it would involve Sunday labour on the part of hundreds of persons, theatres being great workshops; but I have often heard it stated by those who advocate the theatre and drama that they minister to the instruction and education as well as the amusement of the people, and if museums are to be opened on this ground the cry would next follow that theatres ought. In every Continental capital where the picture galleries and museums are open, there also the theatres are open. If this Motion were to be passed it would be a breaking down of the barrier which now prevents hundreds of persons having to work on Sundays in London and provincial theatres. Hon. Gentlemen opposite have not, I think, represented the real opinion of the working classes on this subject, and in the interest of the public servants and also of the people themselves, Her Majesty's Government feel bound to oppose this Motion.

(12.40.) MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston): I should not have interposed in this Debate, especially at this late hour, but for the extraordinary statement that has just been made by the First Lord of the Treasury. The right hon. Gentleman has stated that, so far as he is aware (and I am convinced he has only said what he believes to be true) the working-men have a great regard for the Sabbath. I share that opinion. Working men do not fear—and that is the point of difference between them and the right hon. Gentleman—that the opening of museums on Sunday will jeopardise in any way the sacred character of the Sabbath. Let me supply a proof. The right hon. Gentleman made an assertion, but gave us no proof. I am going to supply him with information which I think it is very necessary should be at the disposal of the House, and which may, perhaps, assist some hon. Members in making up their minds. I do not say the Trade Union Congress represents the entire body of the working classes of the United Kingdom; but every Member of the House will admit that it is about the most representative gathering that takes place from January to December. Well, the Trade Union Congress on three, if not four, different occasions has pronounced a deliberate verdict in favour of the Sunday opening of these institutions. Such an expression of opinion ought to have greater weight with the House than the vague assertions of the First Lord of the Treasury as to the feeling of the working classes. The bogey of the Continental Sunday has as usual been trotted out to scare us. I have frequently observed that Members of this House who are at home so careful not to make any inroad upon the Sabbath, and who pose before their constituents as having a very sincere and profound regard for sacred institutions, when on the Continent forget their professions, attend places of amusement on Sunday, and visit St. Cloud, Versailles, the Louvre, and such like places. I cannot understand how they square the professions they make at home with their practice abroad. It seems to me that the opposition to this Motion is not a sincere opposition. It smacks somewhat—I was going to say of hypocrisy, but I will not indulge in that phrase, as it might be considered offensive. Supposing the opening of museums and picture galleries on the Continent has produced the Sabbath that has been described, how is it that the people who have to work so long on the Sabbath do not put an end to it? If there is one country outside Switzerland in which the people are masters of the situation it is France; and I undertake to say, from a knowledge of that country extending over 20 years, that there is nothing which would be more likely to bring about a revolution or cause the people to rise *en masse* than an attempt on the part of their Government, Republican and Liberal as it is, to close the museums and art galleries and other places of amusement on Sundays. I do not think the working classes in France can be suffering from a grievous wrong in this matter, for they not only tolerate but enjoy, and would not allow anybody to deprive them of their privileges on the Sabbath. So much, then, for the bogey of the Continental Sunday. I do not pretend to be an exponent of the opinions of the working classes generally. I only claim to speak for those I know and represent; but it is quite clear that if the opinions of Representatives who are known in this House as the Labour Representatives, are to be accepted as any evidence of the feelings of the working classes on the subject, the large preponderance of the working classes are in favour of the Motion. I am right in saying that the only Member of our group opposed to the Motion is the hon. Member for West Birmingham (Mr. Broadhurst), and if he is absent to-night from the Division I think we may conclude that his opposition is not very pronounced. As far as my own constituents are concerned, 95 per cent. of them are in favour of the Motion. Throughout the whole of the East End, if we polled it, we should have a large majority in favour of the Motion. Whether the Motion is accepted or rejected, I am sure that the day is not far distant—and I am strengthened in that view by the feeble opposition offered by the right hon. Gentleman who has just sat down—when this Motion will be carried.

(12.49.) Mr. M. STEWART (Kirkcudbright): I only wish to say one word before the House goes to a Division. It is said that we on this side contend that the working men of London are not so much in favour of Sunday opening as hon. Gentlemen opposite say they are. Well, I hold in my hand a paper which states that since January over 20,000 working men living in the neighbourhood of the People's Palace have expressed the opinion that that institution ought not to be opened on Sunday. It is clear, therefore, that hon. Members opposite are not entitled to say that all working men are supporters of the Motion before the House.

*(12.52.) Mr. DE LISLE (Leicestershire, Mid): I had come to the House intending to vote against the Motion, but I have been converted to the view

that the practical objections to the proposal are not well-founded in fact. In principle, this Motion is entirely in accordance with the ancient canon law, which is the historic basis for the observation of the Christian Sunday. If time allowed, I should be prepared to show that the work entailed is not of a different kind from that which is done by ordinary gentlemen on the Sunday. To lounge about a gallery and criticise works of art or antiquity is the leisure of those who live a life of ease. [An hon. Member: Taking care of umbrellas.] It is not the kind of work which can be properly called labour. I am aware that many of the leaders of the most respectable Religious Bodies of this country are opposed, because they fear it will tend in the direction of inducing a general desecration of the Sunday; but, being of opinion that every gentleman who possesses an art gallery and library of his own uses it for his own recreation on the Sunday, and recognising that these galleries are the people's galleries, I see no objection to the Motion. If I thought the proposal would lead to the opening of theatres or concert halls I would as strenuously oppose the Motion as the right hon. Leader of the House; but I trust the time is at length coming when the English people will be able to take a view of the due observance of the Sunday which is at once rational and religious, and I therefore feel constrained to support this reasonable Motion.

(12.54.) The House divided:—Ayes 166; Noes 39.—(Div. List, No. 100.)

Main Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Supply,—Committee upon Monday next.

It being after One of the clock, Mr. Speaker adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at five minutes after One o'clock till Monday next.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Monday, 23rd March, 1891.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Lord Auckland—Petition of William Morton Eden Baron Auckland in the Peerage of Ireland, claiming a right to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland; read, and referred to the Lord Chancellor to consider and report thereupon to the House.

MARRIAGE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL [H.L.]

An Act for the Amendment of the Marriage Act, 4 George IV., chapter 76—Was presented by the Lord Bishop of London; read 1ª; to be printed; and to be read 2ª on Thursday the 16th of April next. (No. 79.)

NEWFOUNDLAND.

QUESTION—OBSERVATIONS.

*THE EARL OF KIMBERLEY: My Lords, I wish to ask the noble Marquess opposite a question of which I have given him private notice, namely: What reply, if any, has been sent by the Government to the request of the Newfoundland Legislature that sufficient time should be given to that Legislature to send over a deputation from that country for the purpose of representing their views upon the subject of the Newfoundland Commission Bill?

THE PRIME MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (The Marquess of SALISBURY): My Lords, the idea that we intended to hurry the Bill forward was obviously absurd. We should not have brought it in the day before the Recess if we had intended to do that. The Recess, which in this House, will last a considerable time, will furnish ample time for any representations which the Newfoundland Legislature may wish to make, and which we shall be very glad to consider thoroughly. We have informed them that the Bill will not come on in this House for Second Reading before the 15th of April, and could not possibly reach the House of Commons for Second Reading before the 23rd or 24th of April. There will, therefore, be the fullest time for consideration.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 70.)

Commons Amendments to Lords Amendments, and Commons reasons for disagreeing to some of the Lords Amendments, considered (according to order).

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE: My Lords, I cannot help making a few observations upon some of these Amendments, though I shall confine myself to only those which appear to me to require it. I offer no remarks as to the possession clause; because I assume that it will be returned to the Commons in an amended form. I observe that the Commons have struck out the clause in which it was proposed by your Lordships that costs vexatiously or oppressively occasioned might be ordered by the Court to be recovered in the ordinary manner; and as I understand that clause was struck out by Her Majesty's Government in the House of Commons, on the ground that it was contrary to an engagement which had been given that no money demand to be enforced under this Act should be personally recoverable, I cannot help expressing my great surprise, as well as regret, that so improvident an engagement should have been given on the part of Her Majesty's Government. The very words "vexatiously and oppressively" speak for themselves, and that the thing aimed at might happen is certain, because the power of the purse is great, and when certain motives concur with the power of the purse there can be no doubt that unnecessary costs, which would be both "vexatious" and "oppressive," may be incurred; and why upon any intelligible principle those costs should not be dealt with in the ordinary manner I cannot understand. I do not mean to ask your Lordships to dissent from what the House of Commons have done in that respect, because it was done in consequence of what I cannot help thinking was an unfortunate and improvident engagement on the part of Her Majesty's Government; but having thought it my duty to make that proposal in this House, I think it also my duty to accompany with a protest my acquiescence in what has been done. Then, the next point which I think it necessary to observe upon is this, upon which I will state what, for my own part, I propose to do. Your Lordships passed by amendment a clause which was not introduced originally in the House of Commons, to the effect that upon any application to the County Court for an order under this Act, the costs either of a solicitor or of a witness should not be allowed in any case where the amount claimed was paid without further proceedings; and, when notice of opposition had been given within the prescribed time, the costs of a solicitor should only be allowed for work done subsequent to the notice. That, I think, is reasonable and just, but the House of Commons has amended this clause by providing that on any application to a County Court for an order under this Act, no costs, either of a solicitor or of a witness, shall be allowed not only in any case where the amount claimed is paid without further proceedings, but also where notice of intention to apply for time to pay the tithe owner's claim has been given, except in cases where costs would be allowed by the Court on a judgment summons, which, I daresay, is right. At all events, I presume it would not extend to cases where application had been made, but payment had not, and further proceedings had followed. But the words have also been put in—"Nor in any case where no notice of opposition has been given." I cannot help thinking that in putting in those words the difference has been entirely lost sight of between the operation of this Bill, and ordinary proceedings in the County Court. In an ordinary case in the County Court, if no notice of opposition has been given, judgment is passed and signed at once for the payment of the amount claimed, which is forthwith executed by the bailiffs of the Court, and there is an end of the whole thing. But, under this Bill, there will not be an end of the whole thing, and if the owner is not known, or, although known and served, does not choose to appear, that is only the beginning of further proceedings which must be taken to work out the special remedy provided under this Act by the appointment of a receiver; and then, when the receiver is appointed, various further questions may arise if difficulties are thrown in his way. Is it intended that in proceedings of that kind the tithe owner is not to be advised by a solicitor; and is he not to recover those costs although he is entirely in the right, and has only taken his ordinary legal remedy for the purpose of recovering that money which the landowner might pay but does not pay, and does not come forward to defend himself? Is it intended to say that in such cases there should be an absolute rule against allowing costs which there would be no alternative but to incur; and that (as would be the effect of these words) to the very end of the proceedings, however protracted they might be, and however much the remedy might be obstructed? It appears to me not only absurd, but so absolutely unjust, that I feel compelled to ask your Lordships to disagree with that part of the Amendment of the House of Commons. As to the third point, I confess I think it is to be regretted that the House of Commons should have insisted upon retaining the definition of "owner" by reference to the Tithe Act of 1836, without any alteration or amendment whatever. My own opinion is that at least some direction, as to the cases of joint-ownership under the Act of 1836, was desirable; and that, without some such direction, there might be some difficulty in applying that portion of the interpretation under possible circumstances. I think, however, that the difficulty is not one which will be found practically serious; and, such as it is, it may be met by proper Rules. I do not, therefore, propose to ask your Lordships to disagree with the Commons on that point, though I cannot but think that it would have been better if the matter had been left as it was.

Moved, to omit the words "nor in any case where no notice of opposition has been given."—(*The Earl of Selborne.*)

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: My Lords, undoubtedly the Government in the House of Commons felt itself bound by the pledge which the noble and learned Lord has referred to. He may, perhaps, remember that I was myself in sufficient doubt as to the working of that pledge to tell him at the time that I was not certain that the clause would be adhered to. When he says he regrets that the pledge should have been given, I entirely concur with him in the regret that it should have been found necessary; but as he is no doubt aware there was a great deal of cross-voting upon this Bill, and it was not a Bill on which the Government could be absolutely certain that they could count with confidence upon the support of a majority in the House upon all occasions. It was necessary therefore—I presume they felt it necessary—to meet strong feelings where those feelings were expressed, and there was undoubtedly a very strong feeling against the enactment for the first time of any personal responsibility in whatever form it might be carried out. I regret very much that that should be found necessary, and I concur with the noble and learned Lord in thinking that the Act would have been much better if it had remained as it left your Lordships' House. But I do not think that the clause would, in that event, have been very widely required, because wherever there is sufficient rent to pay the tithe there will be probably enough to pay costs too, and they can always be levied for. It is only where there is no rent to pay costs that the possible occasion would arise which the noble Earl's Amendment was intended to meet. I do not think that will be an ordinary case, and therefore we may hope that no practical evil will result from a change in the Bill, which I quite admit is a change for the worse. With regard to the other matter I have no knowledge with respect to the cause why those words which the noble Earl referred to in the second place were inserted. I think it must have been without a due consideration of all the results to which they may lead, and I certainly shall not oppose the Motion of the noble Earl to ask for a reconsideration of that question. With respect to the main matter that we have to deal with, namely, the clause which gives power to issue a writ of *habere facias possessionem*, it certainly was the opinion of distinguished lawyers in the other House, that as the clause left us it would not have worked, and that the two processes—the procedure under the old Act and that instituted under the new—had not been efficiently screwed together; and it is now proposed to revert to the process under the old Act, which we know by some 50 years' experience will at all events lead to results of some kind.

Amendment to the Commons' Amendment, agreed to.

On the consideration of the Commons Amendment, omitting the definition of "owner" inserted by the Lords,

THE LORD CHANCELLOR said: My Lords, I cannot forbear to enter my protest against this Amendment. It is a mere matter of definition and drafting, and I must say that, after the very careful consideration given to that point by my noble Friend Lord Thring, with all his experience, I very much regret that that definition has been omitted. I cannot help thinking that great difficulty will be experienced in the working of the Act without that definition.

On consideration of the Commons' Amendment disagreeing with the insertion of "rent-charge" after "tithe," in page 7, line 14, because unnecessary,

*THE EARL OF SELBORNE said: I wonder whether there is any other reason? I confess it appears to me that it would have been much more accurate to retain the words "Tithe Rent-Charge Act" than "Tithe Act," though I do not think it is a point on which it is worth while to differ from the House of Commons, since that is their opinion. It seems to me that the only conceivable reason for adopting the form "Tithe Act of 1891," instead of "Tithe Rent-Charge Act of 1891," is to gratify those people who like to confound tithe rent-charge for some purpose or other with "Tithe."

THE MARQUESS OF SALISBURY: I ventured to warn the noble Earl, when he put this in, that he was aiming at too high a standard of literary excellence.

Amendment agreed to.

Other Amendments to which the Commons have disagreed, not insisted on and Bill returned to the Commons.

House adjourned at five minutes before
Five o'clock, till To-morrow,
half past Five o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 23rd March, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

STANDING ORDERS.

Mr. R. G. WEBSTER (St. Pancras, E.): May I ask when it is proposed to take the new Standing Orders which appear on the Paper?

Mr. COURTNEY (Cornwall, Bodmin): The new Standing Orders, and an Amendment to Standing Orders 21 and 23, which stand on the Paper in the name of the President of the Local Government Board relative to Procedure in case of Bills promoted by the London County Council, will be proposed on Monday, April 6.

COLONIAL POSTAL CHARGES.

Sir C. DALRYMPLE (Ipswich): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he has in contemplation to remedy the great inconvenience to which British traders are put by the charges for transmitting printed matter to the Colonies; and whether he is aware that British firms, in order to obtain the cheap postage prevalent on the Continent to India, Australia, New Zealand, &c., send large packages of price-lists and circulars to an agent abroad, to be posted there?

*The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, Cambridge University): I have been informed that certain firms send their price-lists and circulars to the Continent to be posted; but the transfer of this unremunerative business to foreign post offices is not financially disadvantageous to the British Post Office, though a slight advantage may be gained by the senders of the circulars. I have for some time been considering the question of postage rates as they affect the book post, which have formed part of the subject recently inquired into by a Departmental Committee. But I cannot at present say whether any reduction can be made in this particular case.

INDIAN COUNCIL BILLS.

Mr. MONTAGU (Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India whether the surplus drawings of Council bills, which now exceed the amount estimated in the last Budget by about £750,000, without reckoning the sum announced to be drawn next week before the end of the present financial year, are in anticipation of the amount required next financial year, and will be deducted from the £16,000,000 estimated in the new Budget?

*The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): I beg, in the absence of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India (Sir J. Gorst), to answer the question. The amount of £14,989,000 in the Budget for 1890-91 has, in the revised Estimate just published, been raised to £15,989,000. The Estimate for 1891-92 is £16,000,000. Unless the sum received up to the 31st instant exceeds £15,989,000, there will be no deduction from the £16,000,000 estimated for 1891-92.

Mr. MONTAGU: Can it not be possible in future to bring the balance nearer?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: The estimates are drawn as carefully as possible. The amount now estimated has been very carefully considered.

OPIUM DENS IN LOWER BURMA.

Mr. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India (1) whether he supports the statement made in the official "Collection of Papers relating to the Excise Administration of India" (page 334), issued by the Government of India in 1890, that there exists only one opium den in the Akyab district of Lower Burma, or has he any further information which would support the statement that there are over 1,000 opium dens in that district; and (2) what is the total amount of opium consumed in Upper and Lower Burma in the years 1887, 1888, and 1889, respectively and separately?

*Sir J. FERGUSSON: As regards the first question of the hon. Member, I must refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to a similar question on the 26th of February, when it was stated that the Government of India would be asked to inquire into the allegations as to the number of opium shops; but that, according to the latest Excise Reports, there was only one licensed shop in the Akyab district, and that if information were given to the police of others they would be suppresed. A Despatch on the subject has been sent to the Government of India. The answer to the second question is that the lawful consumption of opium in Lower Burma in 1887-8 was 48,226 seers; in 1888-9, 51,139 seers; and in 1888-9, 53,348 seers. No correct statistics exist for Upper Burma. The Report for 1889-90 says that 669 seers were imported during those years, but that probably a much larger quantity was smuggled.

TREATMENT OF TENANTS IN THE NORTH-WEST PROVINCES OF INDIA.

MR. SCHWANN: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for India (1) whether he is aware that a Government tenant, Russ Ram by name, farming 17 acres in the Jolesar Tahsil, Etah District, North-West Provinces, whose Kharif and Rabi crops in 1887 were of the value of Rs.321 9 0, paid as rent Rs.306, being 95 per cent. of the gross produce; (2) whether his attention has been called to the following cases cited in the Report on the economical condition of the Agricultural and Labouring Classes of the North-West Provinces of India (1886): Aba Ram, a cultivator of 21 fields in Nangaum, Payana Chhata, whose gross yield in 1887 was Rs.70 4 0, the sum of Rs.68 15 0 was taken for rent and canal dues, being 99 per cent. of the gross produce; Hira Singh and Bhara Singh (brothers), of Hazara, cultivators of 10 acres, whose gross yield in 1887 was Rs.67, the sum of Rs.40 11 6 was taken for rent; and Baksha, cultivator of seven acres in the Jolesar Tahsil, District Etah, the gross produce in 1887 was Rs.85, and the rent taken was Rs.40; (3) whether the above cases may be taken as samples of the manner in which the State, as landlord in the North-West Provinces, treats its tenants; and (4) whether any remission of rent or delay for payment was granted; and, if not, under what circumstances are remissions or delays granted?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: In reply to questions No. 1 and No. 2 I have to say that it is a mistake to speak of these ryots as Government tenants. They are tenants of private landlords. Otherwise, the facts are correctly reproduced from the Return presented to Parliament on the 21st of June, 1889. The Return being very bulky has never yet been printed. The reply to the third question is, No. The ryots whose names are given were tenants, not of the State but of private landlords. In the two districts concerned—Etah and Muttra—the State Land Revenue falls on the cultivated area at the rate of 1½ rupees per acre in Etah and 2⅓ rupees per acre in Muttra. The answer to the fourth question is that the Secretary of State cannot say whether the landlords in these cases granted remissions of rent; but the Reports contained in the Parliamentary Return show that these ryots, with the exception of Aba Ram, were not in arrears with their rent and were not seriously involved in debt.

THE SILKSWORTH EVICTIONS.

MR. STOREY (Sunderland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is aware that, on Saturday, 6th March, the County Magistrates at Sunderland refused the application by Mr. Dix, on behalf of the miners of Silksworth, to enter into a bond with two sureties to try the point of law in the Superior Court, and also refused to delay the execution of the warrants of eviction; and whether, having regard to the provisions of 1 & 2 Vic., c. 74, s. 3, the Magistrates, if satisfied of the sufficiency of such sureties, had any legal power to refuse the said application; whether he is aware that, on Saturday, 13th March, after notice of mandamus, the said County Magistrates agreed to bind the said miners, but required a bond of £150 in each case, or, there being in all nearly 500 cases, a total security for costs of £75,000 sterling; whether, the point of law in all these cases being one and the same, the practice of the Superior Court is, under such circumstances, to consolidate the actions into one; whether Clause 3 of the Act requires the Magistrates to approve two sureties

> "in such sum as to them shall seem reasonable, regard being had to the value of the premises and the probable costs of an action;"

and whether a demand for sureties for £75,000 was in accordance with the Act?

*The SECRETARY of STATE for the HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. Matthews, Birmingham, E.): I am informed by the Clerk to the Justices that on the 7th March the Magistrates refused the application of Mr. Dix, because in their opinion, which had been twice expressed in previous cases and acquiesced in by the tenants, the point of law which Mr. Dix raised, namely, that a new tenancy had been created in the miners by holding over, and that there was no lawful right to possession in the landlord, was not well founded. On the 14th March the application of Mr. Dix was renewed as to another batch of warrants, and counsel for the landlord on this occasion joined in the application in order to get the legal question definitely settled. For this reason, and not because Mr. Dix on the 14th March intimated his intention of applying for a mandamus, the Magistrates agreed to accept sureties. The amount of the sureties was settled between Mr. Dix and the counsel for the landlord at £100 for the value of the premises and £50 for the probable costs of the action in each case. There were 173 cases included in the application of the 7th March. Ultimately bonds were completed in two cases only, the sureties in those cases refusing to execute any further bond, no other sureties being offered. The Magistrates made various offers to facilitate the finding of sureties by the defendants; and ultimately made an offer, with the landlord's consent, to reduce the amount in all cases, but the two above mentioned to the nominal sum of £5; but this offer was refused. The Magistrates held that under Section 3 of the Statute they were bound to require separate bonds in each case; that they had no power to delay the remedy under one warrant because security had been given with respect to another; and that they had not power to consolidate the cases, as the Superior Court might and probably would do. I have no authority to interpret the Statute, and must decline to express an opinion on the subject.

LOCAL LOANS FUND.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON (Shropshire, Oswestry): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can inform the House whether it is true that the interest in arrear upon the various public loans in connection with the Local Loans Fund is in England over £400,000, and in Ireland over £200,000?

*The CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (Mr. Goschen, St. George's, Hanover Square): The situation is as follows:—In the Report of the Controller and Auditor General on the Local Loans Fund the arrears of interest are given, but a great portion of that interest has already been written off as lost, and is kept on the account merely as against the debtor. As regards England, the amounts advanced by the Public Works Loan Commissioners applied not only to English loans, but to loans made by them in Ireland in old times; the arrears are the accumulations of a long period. Such items as the following are included in the account:—The Ulster Canal, £227,000; Rosslare Harbour, £25,000; Pulteney Harbour, £19,000; and Carlingford Lough, £20,000. The only other considerable item on this account is "Battersea Park," where the arrears of interest were £74,000. In this case the property, consisting of lands adjacent to the park, is in the hands of the Office of Works, who pay over all available receipts to the credit of the loan. In Ireland the list of arrears comprises a large number of relatively small items, of which the largest represents Clare Slob. Railways show arrears of £123,000, and each individual case is now annually examined by the Treasury and the Board of Works.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON: Have any of these arrears been written off?

*Mr. GOSCHEN: I think it will be found that some of the items have been written off.

INDEBTEDNESS OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Mr. STANLEY LEIGHTON: I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether his attention has been called to the indebtedness of Local Authorities in England and Wales which, by the last Return, amounts to £195,442,397; and to the fact that the local debt is now 42·7 per cent. higher than it was in 1880, while during the same period the rateable value of the whole country, excluding the Metropolis, has only risen 8·6 per cent.; and whether, under these circumstances, the Government will cause inquiry to be made into the financial condition of Local Authorities?

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. LONG, Wilts, Devizes): The indebtedness of Local Authorities in England and Wales, inclusive of the Metropolis, was, according to the last Return, as stated, £195,442,000, and this shows an increase of 42·7 per cent. since 1880. During the same period the rateable value of the whole country, excluding the Metropolis, has risen 8·6 per cent., and, including the Metropolis, about 12 per cent. The increase of indebtedness in respect to harbours, piers, and docks amounts to £6,362,400, and it should be borne in mind that the debt in respect of these undertakings, which amounts to about £31,000, is with very few exceptions not a charge on local rates, but on tolls, dues, &c. A considerable portion of the increase on the outstanding loans is attributed to the works acquired or undertaken by Municipal Corporations and other Local Bodies in their capacity of Sanitary Authorities. There has been a large expenditure on waterworks, gasworks, sewerage, and sewerage disposal, markets, street improvements, and similar undertakings. A considerable proportion of the expenditure, such as that for waterworks and gasworks, is the result of the Local Authorities themselves undertaking the supply of gas and water, instead of leaving the supply to companies. These undertakings, the outstanding debt incurred in respect of which exceeds £51,000,000, are to a large extent remunerative. In respect of the provision of schools under the Education Acts, there has also been a large capital expenditure during the period referred to. Notwithstanding the circumstances which I have mentioned, the increase of local indebtedness is so large that it is well worthy of attention; but I do not consider that any advantage would result from an inquiry into the financial condition of the Local Authorities of particular districts, and clearly an inquiry into the condition of the districts of all Local Authorities, which number many thousands, could not be undertaken.

DAY TRAINING COLLEGES FOR TEACHERS.

SIR R. PAGET (Somerset, Wells): I beg to ask the Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education if he will be good enough to state to the House what measures are now being taken, with regard to the day training colleges for teachers at Manchester, Birmingham, Newcastle, Cardiff, Nottingham, Leeds, &c., to carry out the recommendation of the late Royal Education Commission, that in all day training colleges for teachers due provision should be made for the religious instruction of the students?

THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (Sir W. HART DYKE, Kent, Dartford): The Report of the Royal Commission mentioned the point as one for the consideration of Parliament, but did not suggest any means by which the Education Department could secure such provision. It is no part of the duty of the Department to inquire into the character or amount of the religious instruction provided, even in residential colleges, which it is assumed will be the care of those responsible for their maintenance; but by requiring that every day training college shall be under the direction of a committee who are responsible for the moral conduct and discipline of the students, and by seeing that all arrangements for the purpose are satisfactory, the Department has, in my opinion, gone to the full extent of its obligations in this important matter.

CHLORODYNE.

MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to the large consumption of chlorodyne, especially among women, and the grave evils which result from this practice; whether the fact of chlorodyne being a patent medicine and protected by a stamp exempts it from the operation of the Sale of Poisons Act; and whether the Government will take into consideration the expediency of classing chlorodyne with other narcotics, and only allow it to be sold under the same restrictions?

MR. MATTHEWS: I received last year a representation from a Coroner's Jury that some restriction should be placed on the sale of chlorodyne. I forwarded this representation to the Privy Council Office, which is the Department concerned. The answer to the second paragraph depends upon the proper construction of Sections 16 and 17 of the Act, to which I beg to refer the hon. Member. Section 2 of the Pharmacy Act, 1868, prescribes the manner by which any article may be added to Schedule A of that Act, namely, by a resolution of the Council of the Pharmaceutical Society. The hon. Member should address any representation to that Society in the first instance.

ADMIRALTY SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

Mr. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of the fact that many of the recommendations for the promotion of Second Division clerks at the Admiralty have, although involving no change in the organisation of the office, been under consideration now for a period of nine months, he can say when there is any likelihood of effect being given to these recommendations?

*The FIRST LORD of the ADMIRALTY (Lord G. Hamilton, Middlesex, Ealing): The delay in dealing with applications for promotion of Second Division clerks is due to various causes, among others, the question of fixing a normal establishment for the Department of the Accountant General, and the creation of a new Department of Ordnance in which one or two of the best Second Division clerks may be included with higher pay. I hope that shortly it will be possible to deal with these applications, each of which will receive careful consideration.

BOY MESSENGERS.

Mr. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the Boy Messengers' and the District Messengers' Companies could be allowed to carry out and to reap the benefit of the system which their labour and capital inaugurated, and if he will, with that view, grant them licences to work the electric call system upon payment of a royalty to the Post Office; and whether, if it should be legally necessary, he will introduce a short Bill to authorise charging a royalty?

*Mr. RAIKES: It is my first duty to vindicate the rights of the State in the Courts of Law if necessary. After this has been done, I am quite willing to consider any suggestions that may be made in the interest of public convenience, so far as they can be reconciled with the law. If the hon. Member has read the correspondence which has passed between the Post Office and the companies, he must be aware that the system inaugurated by these undertakings has been commenced and carried on in the face of repeated warnings of its illegality.

*Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the Patronage Secretary to the Treasury sends, five times a week, written communications to the Government's supporters by messenger; whether that is not an infringement of the rights of the State; and whether the right hon. Gentleman proposes to take any steps to vindicate those rights in this case?

*Mr. RAIKES: Of course I cannot suppose that the hon. Member's question is serious; but I have no reason to believe that the action to which he refers is in any way illegal.

Lord ELCHO (Ipswich): May I ask whether it is illegal to employ commissionaires in the delivery of letters; and, if it is not illegal, whether the right hon. Gentleman will say where legality ends and illegality begins in this matter?

*Mr. RAIKES: There is no illegality in the employment of commissionaires for the delivery of letters. We are advised that it is equivalent to the employment of any ordinary messenger for a particular message. It is not a system for the collection and delivery of letters to the profit of a company which, by that profit, trenches upon the revenue. There is no profit to any company in the employment of commissionaires.

Mr. COBB: Will the right hon. Gentleman be willing to grant some ready way of deciding the legal point involved—as to the right of these companies to deliver letters? Further, when the point is decided, will the right hon. Gentleman be willing to grant licences to the Messenger Companies for the use of the electric call system?

*Mr. RAIKES: It is my intention to have the legal point decided almost immediately. An information will be filed before the Easter holidays, and the case will be heard as soon as the Courts re-assemble. When a decision is given, I shall be in a position to consider the proposal of the hon. Gentleman as to the electric call system, together with any other proposal which may be made.

REMOVAL OF WRECKS.

Sir E. BIRKBECK (Norfolk, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the fact that, on the 16th instant, one of the Palling lifeboats, stationed on the coast of Norfolk, was launched to the assistance of a stranded vessel, and rescued six lives; whether he is aware that she struck on the wreck of the "Danmark," and was seriously stove in; whether this is one of the wrecks for the removal of which the professional advisers of the Board of Trade refused to grant the funds under "The Removal of Wrecks Act (1877) Amendment Act, 1889," notwithstanding the recommendation of the Committee of the Trinity House that it was dangerous to lifeboat service; and whether he will give the necessary instructions for its speedy removal?

*The PRESIDENT of the BOARD of TRADE (Sir M. Hicks Beach, Bristol, W.): Yes, Sir. The facts stated by the hon. Baronet are substantially correct; but I am now in communication with the Trinity House with regard to the removal of the wreck referred to.

POST OFFICE SAVINGS BANK.

Mr. KELLY: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether the actual expenditure in the Post Office Savings Bank exceeded the Estimate in each of the years 1887-8, 1888-9, and 1889-90; whether he will state the amounts of the Estimates, of the total Votes, and of the actual expenditure for overtime in the Post Office Savings Bank in each of these three years; and whether the actual expenditure for overtime for the current financial year up to 14th March exceeds the Estimate for the year 1890-91; and, if so, by what amount?

*Mr. RAIKES: I give the figures asked for by the hon. Member as they appear in the printed Estimates and Appropriation Accounts. The actual expenditure in the Post Office Savings Bank for all purposes in 1887-8 was less than the amount estimated by £7,089, and was greater by £8,085 and £9,356 in the years 1888-9 and 1889-90 respectively. The amounts given in the Estimates, which were also the amounts voted, as the cost of extra duty of the clerical force in the same years were £8,500, £8,500, and £13,000 respectively, and the amounts expended in these years were £11,585, £13,643, and £15,796. The whole amount payable in 1890-91 is £16,282, which exceeds the Estimate by £3,282.

RATTRAY HEAD.

Mr. BUCHANAN (Edinburgh, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade, in view of the fact that the Commissioners of Northern Lights have recently urged strongly the erection of a lighthouse and fog-signal station on Rattray Head, as a necessity for the safe navigation of the adjoining coast, but that this request was refused by the Trinity House, and also, on appeal, by the Board of Trade, on the grounds of the insufficient amount of funds allotted to the Commissioners out of the Mercantile Marine Fund, whether he will take steps to secure that an adequate sum is allotted to the Commissioners of Northern Lights, to enable them to render navigation safe along the coasts for the lighting of which they are responsible?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: The Board of Trade have, on appeal, sanctioned the establishment of a light and fog signal on Rattray Head; but the order in which this and other new lighthouse works sanctioned in Scotland should be carried out has not yet been determined, and I think there are more pressing works than this.

THE *UTOPIA*.

Mr. KIMBER (Wandsworth): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his Department has information of the number of life-belts on board the *Utopia*, and of what description; and whether any new life-belts of foreign design have been submitted to the Board of Trade, and with what result?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: The vessel has been plying between Trieste and New York, and I have, consequently, no official information as to the number of life-belts on board, but I am informed by the owners that there were 160. Only one life-belt of foreign design has been submitted to the Board of Trade, who have not approved it.

POST OFFICE THEFTS.

Mr. HOBHOUSE (Somerset, E.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will explain why, although the parcel was properly insured, all compensation has been refused for the loss of a sum of £8 17s. 7d., which was stolen, *in transitu*, from a parcel sent by post from West Pennard to London, on the 19th January last, and insured at the Glastonbury Post Office; if, in spite of application being made at the time, the Post Office authorities have been wholly unable to discover the thief; if he is aware that the money was collected in West Pennard Church for the purpose of relieving distress among the London poor; and if, under the circumstances, he will re-consider his decision, and order some compensation to be paid?

*Mr. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that compensation has been refused on the ground that the parcel contained money—money being expressly excluded from insurance under the Regulations of the Parcel Post. The parcel when insured was not known by the Post Office servant who received it to contain money. If this had been made known by the sender, the insurance fee would not have been accepted. The thief, I regret to state, has not been discovered. I understand that the money was collected for the purpose named. I regret that it is out of my power to direct that compensation should be paid.

PRISONERS FOR CONTEMPT OF COURT.

Mr. COBB: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, without giving a Return, he can state the number of persons now in prison in England and Wales for contempt of Court, the periods for which they have been in prison, and the places and dates of their committal?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I have asked the Prison Commissioners to furnish me with this information, which I will in due course communicate to the hon. Member. I do not, however, propose to include in the Return persons who have been committed by County Court Judges for non-compliance with an order to pay a debt.

"SHARPE v. WAKEFIELD."

Sir W. LAWSON (Cumberland, Cockermouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, in view of the great importance of the decision of the House of Lords on the appeal case of "Sharpe *v.* Wakefield," and the desirability of removing any uncertainty as to the existing Law in regard to the renewal of licences, he will consent to print the full text of the Judgments delivered, and to deliver Copies to hon. Members of this House, and to the Magistrates' Clerks and Clerks of the Peace throughout England and Wales?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I do not think that the re-production of the newspaper reports as a Parliamentary Return would be advisable, as they would not necessarily have the authority and accuracy which in such a case would be essential. These Judgments will in due course appear in the most authoritative form in publications devoted to reporting the decisions of the Courts of Law. Such publications are well known and perfectly accessible to all Magistrates' Clerks and Clerks of the Peace.

Sir W. LAWSON: Will the right hon. Gentleman instruct the Solicitor General to draw up a short abstract?

Mr. MATTHEWS did not reply.

Mr. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware whether the decision given by the House of Lords overrules that given in the City of Dublin (Queen's Bench) to the contrary effect?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I am afraid I am not sufficiently acquainted with both Judgments to be able to answer that question.

THE SELF-GOVERNING COLONIES AND COMMERCIAL TREATIES.

Mr. HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he can state what decision has been arrived at with regard to the protest of the Agents General of the self-governing Colonies, presented to the Trade and Treaties Committee of the Board of Trade, against the maintenance of the clause in the

Treaty of Commerce concluded with Belgium in 1862, and with the German Zollverein in 1865, prohibiting British Colonies from admitting to colonial markets the goods of Great Britain and Ireland at a lower duty than the products of Belgium or Germany, and practically of any foreign nation; whether a similar denunciation was also urged by a deputation comprising Members from both sides of the House, and of the Canadian Legislature; whether the Committee made some weeks ago a Report on the subject; and when such Report will be laid upon the Table?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Evidence to the effect stated in the question was given to the Trade and Treaties Committee, and the Committee have reported on the subject; but I do not think it advisable at present to publish their Report.

TYPE-WRITTEN LETTERS.

SIR C. DALRYMPLE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if his attention has been called to the case of a large manufacturer at Ipswich, who on submitting a specimen of 20,000 circulars in new type somewhat resembling type writing, to be transmitted at the cost of £80 postage, was told that they could not be sent except at the letter rate, because

> "The Department cannot undertake to distinguish between type-written letters and letters or circulars produced by means of printing or other mechanical process in imitation of type-writing";

and how the rule so laid down agrees with an extract in the *Postal Guide* (p. 3, *re* circular letters), which includes among letters that may be sent by book post those which are produced

> "By means of ordinary type, engraving, lithography, or other mechanical process"?

MR. DIXON-HARTLAND (Middlesex, Uxbridge): I beg to ask the Postmaster General why the Post Office refuse to pass at the halfpenny rate circulars printed in characters resembling those of the type-writer; and whether he will give orders that they may in future be accepted?

SIR C. DALRYMPLE: I beg also to ask the Postmaster General if he will explain on what grounds, although the Act of 1870, passed when the halfpenny postal rate was introduced, defined a newspaper as—

> "Any publication consisting wholly or in great part of political or other news, or of articles relating thereto, or to other current topics, with or without advertisements,"

the Post Office interpret "great" as meaning "greater," and decide what are articles relating to "current topics;" and whether objections raised by the Department based on the proportion of different contents, not only cause inconvenience to the public, but loss of revenue from this source?

*MR. RAIKES: I am advised that under the Act of 1870 it is for the Postmaster General to decide when a publication contains a sufficient proportion of

> "Political or other news, or of articles relating thereto, or to other current topics,"

to satisfy the requirements of the Act, and, though the view that commended itself to some of my predecessors was that the phrase "wholly or in great part" required a preponderance of the matter specified, I have adopted a more liberal interpretation, and hold the Act to be complied with if the space given to

> "News or to articles relating thereto, or to other current topics,"

is not less than one-third of the whole paper. The only ground on which objection is raised to the registration of publications is that they do not comply with the conditions laid down in the Act. In regard to the last paragraph of the hon. Member's question, I may state that there is already a considerable loss from the conveyance of newspapers at ½d. each; but I do not think the loss is enhanced by the regulation referred to. The particular Paper headed "Facts about Kola," which the hon. Member (Mr. Dixon-Hartland) has forwarded to me, is transmissible at the book post rate, not being of the nature of a letter at all. But in regard to the general question put by the hon Member, as he is no doubt aware, the type writer is now largely resorted to for the production of ordinary letters, which are, of course, chargeable at the full letter rate of postage. He may also be aware that various devices are employed to turn out from the printing press close imitations of type-writing work, the unevenness of impression, the irregular interspacing, the dropping of letters, even the smears, being so carefully copied, that except by experts, and by daylight, it is impossible to distinguish such productions of the press from productions of the type-writer. In these circumstances, I have found it absolutely necessary to give directions that productions of the type-writer, or imitations thereof, are not admissible as circulars, but that all letters in type-writing characters are liable to letter postage, and I regret I should not feel justified in withdrawing those directions. An announcement on the subject will appear in the April number of the Post Office Guide.

THE COAL MINES REGULATION ACT.

MR. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been drawn to complaints from the mining district round Airdrie, alleging that the provisions of Section 21 of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, which requires that daily personal supervision shall be exercised either by the manager or by an under manager, nominated in writing by the owner or agent of the mind, is in many cases habitually neglected; if so, whether he has made inquiry into the complaints, and with what result?

MR. MATTHEWS: My attention has been drawn to these complaints, and I have made inquiry. The Inspector reports that the existing arrangements work satisfactorily; but I am not satisfied that in some cases the requirements of the law as to personal supervision are fully observed; and I have it under consideration what further proceedings it may be desirable to take.

THE ROYAL NAVAL RESERVE.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL (Liverpool, Kirkdale): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he has under consideration any arrangements for making local provision for courses of annual drill for men of the Royal Naval Reserve serving on Royal Naval Reserve vessels which are placed on distant stations and do not come to ports in the United Kingdom; and whether such facilities could be afforded at Hong Kong and Esquimalt for men serving on Pacific Mail Steamers earning the Admiralty subvention?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: Provision has been made for drilling Royal Naval Reserve men abroad, serving in vessels subsidised by the Admiralty, and this will include arrangements at Hong Kong for men serving in steamers running between that port and Esquimalt which earn the Admiralty subvention.

SIR G. BADEN-POWELL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Committee appointed to report upon the Royal Naval Reserve and the Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers is specially instructed to collect the opinions of both officers and men who have the experience of actual service in either Force?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: No special instruction of the kind suggested by my hon. Friend seems necessary, as the Committee have power to take evidence, and they would naturally take the opinions of those who have the most practical experience on the subjects upon which they are directed to Report?

NOTTINGHAM LETTER CARRIERS.

MR. H. S. WRIGHT (Nottingham, S.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will explain why a number of letter carriers at Nottingham, who have been on the permanent staff about five years, are only receiving 21s. weekly, whilst others, who commenced their service at the General Post Office on the same date, are receiving 25s. or 26s. a week?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that the second class postmen at Nottingham, to whom I presume the question refers, are on a scale of wages rising from 18s. by 1s. a week to 21s. a week. On promotion to the first-class they would receive wages of 22s., rising to 26s. a week. The rate of wages for postmen employed in London has always been higher than that for postmen in provincial towns.

INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS BILL.

MR. KELLY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will inform the House when the Memorandum containing the data and facts, upon which the provisions of the Inflammable Liquids Bill have been founded, is to be laid upon the Table of the House; and whether, if this cannot be done before the 26th instant, he would be willing to give proper time for full consideration of such facts and data by postponing at once the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill to some date well after the 13th proximo?

*MR. MATTHEWS: The Memorandum containing the data and facts upon which the provisions of the Inflammable Liquids Bill have been founded has been some days in the hands of the printers, and I hope that it will be circulated to hon. Members in the course of the Recess. The notices, however, of opposition to this Bill are so numerous as to render its chances of passing this year very remote. I propose, therefore, as soon as the Memorandum is before the House, to move that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the whole subject, and to await their Report before asking the House to legislate.

SUNDAY COLLECTION OF LETTERS IN LONDON.

SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he will make arrangements for the collection of letters by the Post Office *employés* in London on Sunday evenings in time for the despatch of mails to the country, in the same way as is done in other parts of the United Kingdom?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member I have to state that, in view of the strong disfavour with which extensions of Post Office labour on Sunday are regarded by a large section of the public, as well as of the decision of the Select Committee on this particular question, I have not seen my way to impose additional work upon the Post Office servants in order to make a general collection of letters in London on Sunday evening.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE: Will the right hon. Gentleman give facilities to a private company to carry out such a collection of letters?

*MR. RAIKES: I think I must ask for notice of that question.

BRITISH GUIANA.

MR. WATT (Glasgow, Camlachie): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Colony of British Guiana has been in negotiation with the United States of America, and also with the Dominion of Canada, with a view to the establishment of Reciprocity Treaties for commercial purposes; and, if so, whether he is now prepared to make any statement on the subject?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. DE WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): Suggestions have been made for reciprocal fiscal arrangements between Canada and certain West Indian Colonies, of which British Guiana is one; and the question whether this and other West Indian Colonies should enter into reciprocal arrangements with the United States has also been under consideration. The subject is receiving the careful attention of Her Majesty's Government, and it is not possible to make any statement at present.

BRENNAN TORPEDOES.

ADMIRAL MAYNE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will stop the further manufacture of Brennan torpedoes, pending the completion of the experiments with the dynamite gun, which, it is believed by many, does all that the Brennan torpedo can, and probably much more, and is not open to many of the objections to the Brennan? I beg also to ask whether any Admiralty opinion has been obtained as regards the sites selected for the Brennan installations?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I should have thought that my hon. and gallant Friend would have been aware that the dynamite gun differs so essentially from the Brennan torpedo that the weapons cannot be compared; and it is improbable that the adoption of the former, should it occur, would justify the neglect of the latter means of defence. A naval officer detailed for the purpose advised as to, and concurred in, the sites selected for the Brennan Torpedo Stations.

IMPERIAL DEFENCE ACT.

SIR W. HARCOURT (Derby): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the statutory accounts of expenditure required to be provided under the Imperial Defence Act, the Naval Defence Act, and the Barracks Act for the year ending 31st March, 1891, will be delivered to Members before the Budget?

Mr. GOSCHEN: The right hon. Gentleman is aware that statutory accounts required under the Acts in question are accounts of expenditure actually incurred and audited. It is, of course, impossible to furnish such accounts till some time after the close of the financial year, in view of the distance of some places, such as Hong Kong. But I am considering the form of a Return which will give the Exchequer issues to the various Departments during the year.

FOREIGN POSTAGE OF NEWSPAPERS.

Mr. MORTON: I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether, as a number of newspapers now exceed the four-ounce limit for foreign postage, he can see his way to alter that limit, and place the postage for newspapers for places abroad on the same footing as regards weight as newspapers sent by post in the United Kingdom?

Mr. RAIKES: Without pledging myself as to the decision which may be come to on this subject, I may say that the question raised is already under consideration.

LONG RANGE AT SHOEBURYNESS.

Major RASCH (Essex, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government proposes to lay out a long range down the coast to Warden Point, Shoeburyness, and on to the Nore Light; and, if so, whether, in view of the serious injury to and destruction of fishing on that portion of the coast, the scheme can be modified?

*Mr. E. STANHOPE: I cannot follow my hon. and gallant Friend's question. Warden Point is in Sheppey, and Shoeburyness on the north bank of the Thames, and it certainly is not intended to fire across the river. The extended range at Shoeburyness is over the sands, nearly parallel to the shore, and no injury to fishing is anticipated.

THE CORPS OF COMMISSIONAIRES.

Mr. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthen, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether he is aware that the Corps of the Commissionaires receive and take in letters, for delivery by express messengers, at their office in the Strand, precisely in the same way as the Boy Messengers' Company does; and whether he will state the grounds on which he proposes to differentiate his action under the Post Office Acts between these two useful organisations?

*Mr. RAIKES: I am not aware that the Corps of the Commissionaires receives and takes in letters at its office in the Strand in the mode stated by the hon. Member. The Corps of the Commissionaires has no resemblance in organisation or objects to a company organised for profit, such as that of the Boy Messengers.

MR. GLADSTONE'S VISIT TO HASTINGS.

Mr. KELLY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware of the occurrences which took place at the Charing Cross Railway Station upon the occasion of the departure, on Tuesday last, of the right honourable the Member for Mid Lothian (Mr. Gladstone) for Hastings, when the crowd broke down the frail barriers which had been erected, and two persons were thrown down between the saloon carriages forming part of the moving train, and narrowly escaped being crushed to death; and that again, on the same day, at the Tunbridge Wells Station, another crowd broke down the barriers, and gathered round the train there; and whether the Board of Trade have any power to prohibit the use of railway stations for political demonstrations; and, if so, if he is able to give the House an assurance that it will in future be exercised?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: No, Sir; I have no official knowledge of the facts referred to, and the Board of Trade have no statutory authority to take any action in the matter. But I agree with my hon. Friend in thinking that it is most undesirable that the safety and convenience of those whose business compels them to use railway platforms should be interfered with by political or other demonstrations. If an accident resulted, those who permit such demonstrations will incur a grave responsibility.

EXPLOSIONS IN COAL MINES.

Mr. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Return, "Coal Mines (Explosions)," was compiled (and especially as to the hours of the shifts when the explosions took place) from information already in the Home Office or in the hands of the Inspectors, or whether it was specially obtained from the colliery owners for the purposes of the Return?

MR. MATTHEWS: The Inspectors whom I called upon to furnish this Return do not in all cases state the sources of their information; but it appears to have been gathered for the most part from notes and documents in their possession, and in part from inquiries made at the collieries.

MERCHANT VESSELS.

SIR T. SUTHERLAND (Greenock): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is the case that he has appointed a Committee to investigate the question of arranging a system of watertight bulkheads and compartments in merchant vessels; if any of the members of such Committee are shipowners, actually at the present time carrying on business in that capacity; if he will state the names of the members of the Committee, and the terms of the Reference placed before them for consideration, and Report; and whether they have been authorised to take evidence on the subject?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: As stated in my reply to a question by the hon. Member for Sunderland on the 13th of March, 1890, the Board of Trade have appointed a Special Committee consisting of the following gentlemen:—Sir Edward Harland, M.P., Mr. James G. S. Anderson, Professor Philip Jenkins, Mr. A. C. Kirk, Mr. James Laing, and Mr. T. B. Royden, M.P., to consider and Report upon the question of the efficient subdivision of merchant ships by means of watertight bulkheads, and I shall be happy to furnish the hon. Member with a copy of the terms of Reference. All the members of this Committee, with two exceptions, are shipowners. The Committee are still engaged upon their Inquiry, and have no doubt obtained such evidence as they required; but they have received no special authority for this purpose, beyond that implied in their appointment.

THE GAMING LAWS.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he will introduce his Bill to consolidate the Gaming Laws during this Session of Parliament, so that it may be printed, and Members have an opportunity of considering its provisions?

MR. MATTHEWS: I have nothing to add to the answer which I have already given, and to which I beg to refer the hon. Member.

LITIGATION AGAINST THE WAR OFFICE.

DR. CLARK: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the affidavits filed by a retired officer of the Royal Engineers in the Court of Queen's Bench, and in which a rule *nisi* for *mandamus v.* Secretary of State for War was obtained, 15th November, 1890; and whether he intends to give effect to the official recommendations of the Commander in Chief and Attorney General to make a payment to this officer, and thus end this protracted litigation?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I can only refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Secretary of State for War, on the 28th November last, to an almost precisely similar question. To that answer I have nothing to add.

DISTRESS IN MAYO.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that great distress prevails in the parishes of Kiltimagh and Kilkelly, in the County of Mayo; whether it is his intention to mitigate the distress in these parishes by means of the relief works proposed to be started at Blackloon and Kilbeagh in the same county; whether he is aware that the latter places are a long distance from the former two places; whether he can say how many hundreds of names the police have given as needing relief in Kilkelly and Kilmovee, and how many have been relieved in these places; and whether, considering the numbers in need of relief in Kilkelly and Kilmovee, he will consider the propriety of starting some relief works in that neighbourhood?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): Relief works have been arranged, and are now in progress. I cannot say anything about Kilmovee at present.

IRISH POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. BYRNE (Wicklow, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether there is any truth in the rumour that the mail car which has been plying between Tinahely, Hacketstown, and Kiltegan for the last eight years is about to be discontinued; and, seeing the great advantage and convenience to the commercial and residential community of the existing system, whether he will make arrangements for the continuance of the present postal service through that locality?

*MR. RAIKES: In reply to the hon. Member, I have to state that while a scheme is under consideration for giving a later despatch of the day mail from Hacketstown and Kiltegan, which would involve working the mail car from Baltinglass instead of from Tinahely, I have not as yet full information before me, and I have come to no decision on the subject. I have certainly no desire to make any change which would not be acceptable to the residents generally; and I will take care that their views shall not be lost sight of when the matter comes before me for final decision.

SALE OF AN IRISH FARM.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to an abortive sale by auction, on behalf of the Irish Land Purchase Commissioners, at Marsh's Auction Mart, in the City of Cork, on the 3rd instant, when the farm of Daniel Kelly was put up for sale, he having failed to pay the instalments to the Commissioners; but no bidders appearing, the sale was abandoned; whether he will inquire at what terms as to valuation and number of years' purchase Daniel Kelly purchased the farm, and whether he purchased under threat of eviction by the landlord, Mr. James H. Payne, of West Cork; and whether, in his new Land Bills, he will take measures

Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien

to save the taxpayers from the cost occasioned by such transactions?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Land Commissioners report that the holding referred to was put up for sale as stated in the question. There being no bidders, the sale was adjourned, but not abandoned, as the Commissioners have reason to believe that a sale will be effected. No evidence or complaint reached the Commissioners that the purchase was made under threat of eviction. On the contrary, the terms appear to have been favourable to the tenant. The Poor Law valuation of the holding was £23, the judicial rent was £30, which, by the sale, was considerably reduced, the purchase annuity being £20 in respect of the purchase money of £500 agreed upon. The Commissioners do not apprehend any loss whatever in regard to the transaction.

CHARGES AGAINST AN IRISH CONSTABLE.

SIR T. ESMONDE (Dublin Co., S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that charges have been made against Police Officer James Curry, of the F Division of the Dublin Metropolitan Police, in connection with the action of "Smyth *v.* Madden and Curry"; and whether he will have inquiries made as to whether there is any foundation for these charges?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The Commissioner of Police reports that no charges have been made against the police officer mentioned, except those referred to in previous questions put by the hon. Member in 1888. As then stated, the charges were groundless.

THE KILTIMAGH TELEGRAPH STATION.

SIR T. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Postmaster General if he will allow the telegrams coming in to the telegraph station at Kiltimagh, County Mayo, to count, as well as those going out, towards making up the £68 required by the Post Office, in consideration of the fact that the former, equally with the latter, contribute towards the revenue of the station?

*MR. RAIKES: The telegrams coming in to an office at Kiltimagh from other places would represent revenue proper to those places, and not to Kiltimagh. I regret, therefore, that I am not able to allow them to be credited to the guarantors at Kiltimagh.

JUDICIAL RENTS.

SIR T. ESMONDE: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in the Kiltimagh district of County Mayo, the regulations for the reduction of judicial rents do not apply to the rents due on November last; and whether, although the Government is actually giving relief to the people of that neighbourhood, they are now compelled to pay their rents without any reduction?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I assume that the hon. Member refers to the provisions of the 29th section of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1887. It is the case that the variations of judicial rents throughout Ireland, under that section, only applied to the rents which accrued due for the three years commencing from the first gale day in the years 1887, 1888, and 1889. The half year's rent due in November, 1890, was therefore not affected.

HEALTH OF MR. JOHN DILLON.

DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the reported illness of Mr. John Dillon, M.P.; and if he can give any information with regard to Mr. Dillon's health?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The General Prisons Board report that Mr. Dillon had for a few days a slight internal complaint, but that he reported himself well on Friday morning.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, with respect to the request of the two Houses of the Legislature of Newfoundland conveyed by telegram on the 20th instant, if Her Majesty's Government are now able to make known to the House their reply to that request?

MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): At the same time, I will ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, his attention having been drawn to certain Resolutions passed by the Legislature of Newfoundland, he is prepared to acquiesce in the request contained in those Resolutions?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: In answer to the questions of the right hon. Gentleman opposite and of my hon. and learned Friend behind me, I have to state that the Secretary of State for the Colonies telegraphed on Saturday to the Governor of Newfoundland, requesting him to inform the President of the Legislative Council and the Speaker of the House of Assembly that the Bill to give effect to the *modus vivendi* would not be proceeded with in the House of Lords until the 16th of April, allowing ample time for such further communications from the Parliament of Newfoundland as they might think it right to make, but it would be necessary, if the colony failed to make legislative provision for the observance of existing Treaties and the temporary arrangements with France, for Her Majesty's Government to proceed with the Bill.

CAPTAIN PRICE: May I ask whether the Government has made any attempt to dispose of the whole of the Treaty rights, or supposed Treaty rights, of France in Newfoundland by suggesting an exchange of territory or other equivalent?

*MR. W. SMITH: The proposals made by the delegates here from Newfoundland were submitted to the French Government, but were declined. The French Government have declared themselves unable to negotiate for the surrender of any of their rights until the extent of those rights has been authoritatively settled.

MR. MORTON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government intend to try and compel the Newfoundlanders, by a new enactment, to obey an old and repealed Act of Parliament (the Act of George the Fourth) against the wishes of the Parliament and people of that colony, who are anxious to settle the whole question by buying out the Treaty rights of France?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: This country is bound to secure observance of Treaties and international arrangements with a foreign country as long as they are in force. This obligation is not put an end to by the grant of a representative Legislature to the colony, and if the Colonial

Legislature decline, as they have done, to pass the necessary measures to secure observance of Treaties, the responsibility of this country must be met by the Legislature here. This is not a measure interfering in any way with the internal government of the colony, or with local questions, but is simply a measure of international obligation. If at any time the Colonial Legislature pass the measures necessary for this purpose, it is provided that the original Act shall be suspended.

Mr. STAVELEY HILL: Will the Government, before endeavouring to enforce upon Newfoundland the present *modus vivendi*, give the Newfoundlanders an opportunity of pressing upon them the re-consideration by the French Government of some of its clauses?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I have already said that the Bill will not be proceeded with in the House of Lords until the 16th of April. We have information that the delegation from Newfoundland will start immediately, and there will be ample time for any representation which the Legislature of Newfoundland may wish to make to Her Majesty's Government.

Mr. MORTON: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether, with regard to the buying out of the French Treaty rights, the real difficulty is not our occupation of Egypt?

*Mr. SPEAKER: That is a question which can only be put after due notice has been given.

THE EIGHT HOURS (MINERS) BILL.

Mr. JACOBY (Derbyshire, Mid): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in consideration of the general desire of the House, and the great importance of the question, he will give a day for the discussion of the Eight Hours Bill for miners?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: It is not in my power to set aside a day for the consideration of the Eight Hours Bill for miners.

Mr. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): Seeing that the right hon. Gentleman gave us strong hopes that we should discuss this Bill on the 18th inst., will he now re-consider his decision?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I do not think the hon. Gentleman is entitled to say I did that; I only expressed a desire that the question should be discussed, and suggested a mode by which the Debate could be brought on.

Mr. PICKARD: Cannot the Government give a Saturday after the Easter holidays for the purpose?

*Mr. W. H. SMITH: I am afraid that that would be a most unpopular proposal.

ADMIRALTY ESTABLISHMENTS AT SYDNEY.

Sir J. COLOMB: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether Sydney is the recognised headquarters and base of the British Fleet maintained in the South Pacific for the protection of the maritime interests and sea commerce of the Empire; whether the contemplated surrender of the Admiralty establishment at Circular Quay, Sydney, to the Colonial Government (as referred to in the statement explanatory of the Navy Estimates) includes the surrender of the land; whether this land belongs to, and is under the control of, the Imperial Government; and whether the land to which it is proposed to remove the Admiralty establishment at Sydney belongs to the Imperial Government or to the Colonial Government; and, if to the latter, will the Admiralty reserve the right to use this new naval establishment for Imperial purposes for a fixed period or only during the pleasure of the Colonial Government?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: Sydney is, and remains, the headquarters of the Royal Navy in the South Pacific, in the sense that Admiralty stores are kept there; but the ports of other colonies will be equally visited by Her Majesty's ships, and serve as bases in the event of war. The Admiralty will cease to have any interest in land which is surrendered in exchange for land more suitable for naval requirements. The "Imperial purposes" for which the naval establishments are maintained are primarily the defence of Australasian commerce, and Her Majesty's Government are fully satisfied with the conditions under which the land will be held, which have been agreed upon by Her Majesty's Government and the Colonial Government.

Sir J. COLOMB: Does the noble Lord mean to say we hold the land subject to the consent of the Colonial Government?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: I would not put it in that way. We have an absolute right of ownership of a certain part of the land, and other land is now being transferred to us.

Sir J. COLOMB: Will the noble Lord lay the Papers on the Table?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: We have not the Government contracts.

GIBRALTAR DOCK.

Admiral MAYNE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of his statements on the great importance of the Dock at Gibraltar and of the lengthening of the Mole there, and also of the fact that no reference is made to these important works in his statement for this year, he will state what is the practical upshot of the deliberations of the Committee which reported last year on the Dock, and whether any steps are being taken towards its construction; and whether the Mole is going to be lengthened so as to enable it to store more than the ridiculously inadequate amount of coal it can at present?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: The Committee on the Gibraltar Dock reported last year; but considering the many urgent demands made upon naval finance, and the amount of work of various kinds now in hand, it was considered desirable not to begin the work until a large sum could be annually applied to it, and its construction rapidly and continuously pushed forward. An extension of the Mole would be part of the scheme.

NAVAL POLICE.

Admiral MAYNE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether, in view of the general dissatisfaction now existing with respect to the police in Her Majesty's ships, he will take steps to improve their position, and so induce petty officers and other seamen of standing and good character to join the Force?

*Lord G. HAMILTON: This matter is now under consideration; but as it involves questions beyond those connected with the improvement of the position and pay of ships police, it requires very careful investigation, and a final decision has not yet been arrived at.

BABY FARMING.

Mr. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the evidence in several recent baby-farming cases in which convictions have been obtained for manslaughter; whether he has observed that it appears from the evidence in these cases, and in similar cases, that the children are largely obtained by means of advertisements in daily and weekly newspapers published in London and the provinces; and whether he will take into consideration the advisability of legislating with a view to control or prevent the insertion of such advertisements?

Mr. MATTHEWS: I observe that the evidence in these cases shows that children are obtained by means of advertisement. I do not see my way to legislative interference with these advertisements, which do not invite to anything necessarily illegal. Neither the Infant Life Act of 1872, nor the amending Bill of last year, which was considered by a Select Committee of this House, proposed to control or prevent the insertion of such advertisements, which are, moreover, found by the police to be a useful clue to the whereabouts of the baby-farming establishments.

WATERTIGHT BULKHEADS.

Sir T. SUTHERLAND: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether it is the case that he has appointed a Committee to investigate the question of arranging a system of watertight bulkheads and compartments in merchant vessels; if any of the members of such Committee are shipowners, actually at the present time carrying on business in that capacity; if he will state the names of the members of the Committee, and the terms of the Reference placed before them for consideration, and report; and whether they have been authorised to take evidence on the subject?

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: As stated in my reply to a question by the hon. Member for Sunderland on March 13th, 1890, the Board of Trade have appointed a Special Committee to consider and report upon the question of the efficient sub-division of merchant ships by means of watertight bulkheads, and I shall be happy to furnish the hon. Member with a copy of the terms of reference.

BURMA AND CHINA.

SIR J. POPE HENNESSY (Kilkenny, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether Her Majesty's Government have received any remonstrance from the Government of China respecting the recent annexation of a port of Burma, which part of Burma was tributary to the Empire of China?

SIR J. FERGUSSON: I must ask for notice of the Question. Speaking offhand, I am not aware of any recent communication on the subject.

DOCKYARD PAY.

MR. H. T. KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN (Kent, Faversham): May I ask when the Memorandum explaining the Government proposals for increasing the pay of workmen in our dockyards will be issued?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: I hope it will be in the hands of hon. Members in a few days.

THE COURSE OF PUBLIC BUSINESS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): Will the Motion for the Adjournment be made at the commencement of the Sitting to-morrow?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: No, not necessarily. It may be necessary to advance one or two Bills before the Motion is made.

MR. J. LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): As there are a great many Notices down on the Motion to go into Committee of Supply, and as the first Order, the Committee regarding Scotch Private Bill Procedure, is apparently likely to give rise to some discussion, may I ask on what day after Easter the Government will set down the Order for Supply, Civil Service Estimates?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It is not usual for the appointment of a Committee to take a very long time, and I hope that in an hour and a half's time we may be able to proceed with the Civil Service Estimates.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I took exception to a like course being adopted on the Navy Estimates, and the First Lord of the Treasury gave way. I must now ask whether it is not the case that there is no precedent for putting down Supply as the second Order?

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is aware that the majority of Scotch Members left town on the understanding that the Scotch Private Bill Committee would not be taken to-night?

VISCOUNT WOLMER (Hants, Petersfield): May I ask whether the right hon. Gentleman is aware that the proposal to nominate the Committee before the Easter adjournment has created great satisfaction in Scotland?

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): And I will ask whether, in case the Speaker is got out of the Chair to-night, it is intended to take effective Supply?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir, it is not intended to do that. There is no rule against moving the Speaker out of the Chair as the second Order of the Day, when it is preceded simply by the question of the nomination of a Committee. I gave notice early in the week that if the Scotch Committee was not appointed before Easter it would not be taken until the Thursday after Easter; and, in answer to a question, I gave notice on Friday that I should propose it to-day, being aware, as the noble Lord has stated, that there is a strong feeling in Scotland in favour of the Committee being appointed. I am only keeping my engagement, therefore, with the House in putting down the Committee for to-day. The Member for Stirling Burghs spoke to me privately on Friday, and I told him, as I told other hon. Gentlemen, that the Government intended to proceed with the Motion on Monday. I should be exceedingly sorry if Scotch Members are not present, but I repeat I have given full notice, and I must adhere to the arrangement.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he did not state on Thursday that the Private Bill Procedure Committee would be nominated on Friday, and whether it is not within his knowledge that a large number of Scotch Members, relying on that statement, arranged to leave town on Saturday morning?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. Gentleman is well aware that though I may propose I cannot dispose of the time of the House. I certainly had no expectation that the proceedings on the Welsh Tithe Bill, with regard to one clause, would be protracted as they were. Owing to that fact, it was impossible to take the Motion on Friday.

MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): Was there not an hour and a half available on Friday when the Motion might have been taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I do not wish to impute anything to the hon. Gentlemen who differ from me in my views, but I had reason to believe that the opportunity would be taken to talk out the discussion on that night.

MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): When the right hon. Gentleman stated on Thursday that if the Motion was not taken on Friday it would not be taken till after Easter, did not the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stirling Burghs make arrangements to leave England on Saturday, so that when it was decided to bring that on to-day it was too late for him to alter them?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I should be exceedingly sorry if the right hon. Gentleman misunderstood me. But if reference was made to the record it will be seen that my statement was that if the Motion for the Committee was not taken before Easter it would not be taken till the Thursday after. Moreover, no suggestion was made to me of an objection being raised at a sitting like this, which is a day before the adjournment.

MR. FINLAY (Inverness, &c.): I hope the right hon. Gentleman will persevere with the Motion, as great interest is taken in the matter in Scotland.

SIR W. LAWSON: What business will be taken before the Motion for the adjournment for the holidays is made?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope the Motion for the Adjournment will be reached at a Morning Sitting to-morrow. The course will be to move that the House after a Sitting on Wednesday, or perhaps, Thursday—because the Government can hardly tell when the Commission will arrive for the Royal Assent—adjourn until Monday, April 6. It is not intended to proceed with any business at the Sitting on Wednesday or Thursday, whichever may be the day fixed for the Royal Assent to the Tithe and other Bills. The Commission will make a House, and therefore no quorum of Members will be necessary.

MR. W. E. GLADSTONE: Will the First Lord of the Treasury be good enough to say what Bills will be advanced before the Motion for Adjournment?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Mail Ships Bill, the Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, and one or two others.

MR. D. CRAWFORD (Lanark, N.E.): What Supply will be taken when the House resumes?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Class I. of the Civil Service Estimates.

SIR J. SWINBURNE: Will the Tithes Bill come before the House again prior to the holidays?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Yes, Sir; we have reason to believe it will be before us to-morrow.

ARMY (COURTS MARTIAL).

Address for—

"Return for 1890 for each Regiment of Cavalry (including the Cavalry Depôt), Battery of Artillery, Company of Engineers, and Battalion of Infantry, respectively, of the number, and proportion to average strength, of (1) Courts-Martial, distinguishing those in which the offences are only in relation to enlistment; (2) minor punishments; (3) desertions; and (4) stations (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 393, of Session 1890)."—(*General Sir Frederick FitzWygram.*)

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill, Army (Annual) Bill.

Amendments to Custody of Children Bill [Lords], without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to alter the constitution of the Fishery Board for Scotland, and to amend the Law in regard to Mussel Fisheries in Scotland." [Fishery Board (Scotland) Bill [Lords.]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for better enforcing Discipline in the case of Crimes and other Offences against Morality committed by Clergymen," [Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill [Lords].

That they have agreed to, Amendments to Amendments to, Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, with Amendments, to which they desire the concurrence of this House; and do not insist on their Amendments to which this House has disagreed.

TITHE RENT CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 251.)

Lords Amendments to Commons Amendments to Lords Amendments to be considered To-morrow, at Two of the clock, and to be printed.

FISHERY BOARD (SCOTLAND) BILL [LORDS].

Read the first time; to be read a second time upon Thursday 9th April, and to be printed. [Bill 259.]

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) BILL (No. 114.)—SELECT COMMITTEE.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Committee do consist of Twenty Members." — (*The Lord Advocate.*)

(4.45.) **MR. E. ROBERTSON** (Dundee): I think the Scotch Members have good reason to complain of the course taken by the Government tonight. I shall, before I sit down, move the adjournment of the Debate. Two reasons mainly actuate me in making this Motion. The noble Lord the Member for Hampshire who told us that there is great joy in Scotland over the action of the Government in this matter is not yet a Scotch Member, and probably never will be. He certainly is not entitled to speak for public opinion in Scotland; all he was justified in saying was that there was great joy in the *Scotsman* office, that the Committee was being proceeded with. Let me advert to the discussion across the Table a few minutes ago. I assert, and the right hon. Gentleman has not denied, that on the part of the Scotch Members there was an understanding that this Committee would not be moved either immediately before the Easter Recess or immediately after the Recess. I believe those were the very words used. And the reason for such an arrangement is clear. The Scotch Members, like those from Ireland, have a long way to travel, and it has become a rule not to take Irish business immediately before or after Easter and Whitsuntide. Surely the same reasons apply for not going on with this Motion to day, especially as the Scotch Members were certainly under the impression that if it was not taken last week it would be left over till after Easter. That is my first reason. My second reason is that it is notorious that in going on with this Motion the Government have executed a change of front without a single word of explanation. It is notorious that some weeks ago the Government stated that they were prepared to accept a Joint Committee of both Houses, instead of the foreign and alien Commission which this Bill proposes. They said the great object was to secure that in the case of Scotch Private Bills there should be a local inquiry, and since that time no communication has been made of a change of views beyond the sudden bringing forward of this Motion. The Government told us they would consider the propriety of proceeding by way of Resolution, instead of by Bill, but suddenly we are told they will insist on the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill. Such a change of front surely requires explanation. These are the grounds on which I have ventured to take the unusual course of moving the adjournment of the Debate. Such a course is, I admit, unusual, but so also are the circumstances. What has been the attitude of the Lord Advocate towards this Bill? Before the Session commenced, at a meeting of Scotchmen, the right hon. Gentleman declared that the progress of the Bill depended on the Scotch Members themselves, and he suggested that pressure should be put on the Scotch Members to help it on. I ask him now, whether, seeing that so many of my Colleagues have gone home to their constituents, that is not a strong reason for not now pressing forward the Motion. I beg to move the adjournment of the Debate.

*(4.52.) **DR. CAMERON** (Glasgow, College): I beg to second that. The right hon. Gentleman was asked not to proceed with the Motion immediately after the Easter holidays, and he said if it were not taken before the adjournment it would not be proceeded with until the 9th April. Thereupon the Member for Stirling Burghs asked that the Motion

should not be taken this week, and the First Lord assented that it should not be taken this week.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): No.

*DR. CAMERON: Of course if the right hon. Gentleman says that he did not mean that, then everyone will accept his statement, but then the right hon. Gentleman said the Motion would be taken on Friday.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I said I hoped so.

*DR. CAMERON: It was put down for Friday, and it might very well have been taken on Friday, instead of a number of small Bills being proceeded with. I may point out another reason for not pressing on this Motion now. The Second Reading of this Bill was taken on the first day of the re-assembling of Parliament after the Christmas holidays—a day most inconvenient for Scotch Members to be in their places. Therefore, we ought now to have a fair opportunity of discussing this matter. I think ample justification has been shown for the adjournment of the Debate.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. E. Robertson.*)

*(4.58.) MR. W. H. SMITH: The hon. and learned Gentleman said he moved the adjournment first, because there has been a breach of an understanding, and next because there is a change of front. I do not think it possible for anyone in my position to be more distinct and clear than I was in what I said on Thursday, for I then said that if it was not taken on Friday it would be taken on Monday. I was careful to say that if it were not taken before the Easter Recess it would not be taken till the Thursday after the House re-assembled. Surely my remarks were of the nature of a distinct notice that the Government desired to take the Motion before the Easter Recess, not on the last day, but on a day like this, when the attendance is usually very full. With regard to the question of change of front, there was no change of front on the part of the Government, who are willing to act on the suggestions contained in the letter which I wrote to the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs (Mr. Campbell-Bannerman), that suggestion being that we would effect such changes in Committee as would make the Bill acceptable to the Scotch Members. But when a Bill has been read a second time and referred to a Select Committee, any change in the measure must be made in that Committee, and we are willing to carry out the promise made to the right hon. Gentleman when the Bill is considered by the Committee. The hon. Member opposite shakes his head.

MR. E. ROBERTSON: The suggestion was that you should abandon the Bill.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: In my letter I distinctly stated that we could not entertain the proposal to abandon the Bill, and that so grave a change with regard to procedure as the substitution of a Commission for Select Committees in dealing with Private Bills could not be made unless by Statute. We are of opinion that procedure by Standing Order is not desirable in so grave a matter, and that the judgment of both Houses of Parliament should be taken with regard to the proposal. It is obviously a proposal which cannot be confined to Scotland, but must be extended to other parts of the United Kingdom if the measure is successful, and it is impossible that it can be made by Standing Order. There is nothing which would pain me more than to have it supposed that I was capable of a breach of understanding in this House; but I cannot be responsible for the interpretation hon. Members may put upon my plain words, which is not consistent with those words. I would remind the House that I stated on Friday, before the adjournment, that I did propose to proceed with this matter to-day and at this hour, and therefore the House is not taken by surprise. Hon. Members from Scotland are not taken by surprise, and therefore I should be breaking down the practice under which we have conducted business hitherto, if I were to yield to the Motion for adjournment.

(5.5.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I am sure that everybody will agree that the right hon. Gentleman is most scrupulously honourable in recognising understandings in carrying on the business of the House, but I must be allowed to say to him that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs has left London under a totally different impression from that which the right hon. Gentleman entertains. We may all have lapses of memory on questions of this sort, and the right hon. Gentleman will, perhaps, allow me to remind him of what was the conversation that really took place as to proceeding with this measure. The right hon. Gentleman admitted that if the matter was not taken before Easter it would not be taken for some time, and my right hon. Friend said across the Table: "Neither immediately before Easter, nor immediately after?"

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I did not gather that.

MR. H. H. FOWLER: I understood my right hon. Friend to say that, and I understood the right hon. Gentleman to bow assent. I would appeal to the right hon. Gentleman in the interests of promoting the business of the House. Nobody wishes to obstruct the appointment of this Committee, but the Scotch Members have a right to have their say with reference to the constitution of the Committee, as far as the Scotch element is concerned. To-night there are several questions of paramount importance on the Paper; the Committee, if appointed, cannot sit before Easter, and therefore, as there has clearly been a misunderstanding, and as both the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Stirling Burghs and the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Berwick, have left London believing that this matter would not come on, I appeal to the right hon. Gentleman to assent to the question being postponed.

(5.10.) DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): Assuming that there has been no breach of faith with the Scotch Members, it would be most unsatisfactory, as a mere matter of business, to enter upon the consideration of a question affecting Scotland so intimately —and a question, which of course, indirectly affects in a like degree England and Ireland — when so large a number of Scotch Members are away. The right hon. Gentleman has said there is a fair number of Scotch Members present, but when I look round I do not see more than 20 of the 70 Scotch Members in their places. I am told that five of the hon. Members whom it is proposed to place upon the Committee are absent, and that two of the hon. Members who have brought forward Amendments in regard to the Committee are also absent. I therefore trust that the small remnant of Scotch Members who are here will take the opportunity of protesting against this action on the part of the Government, and will give support in the Lobby to the Motion of the hon. Member for Dundee. I do not see what reason there is for hurry in this matter, and I have failed to discover in Scotland that extraordinary interest in the question and zeal for its settlement which some hon. Members seem to think exists. We have had some representation from Hampshire that there is a strong feeling in favour of this Bill in Scotland, but I am in a position to know what, at any rate, one Scotch constituency thinks about Scotch questions, and, as yet, I have heard nothing favourable to the Bill from them. I am glad the Motion has been brought forward, for it will show the Scotch people how Scotch questions are dealt with in this House. The fact that this night of all others has been selected for this Motion will cause great dissatisfaction in Scotland.

(5.13.) MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I intend to vote for the proposal of the hon. Member for Dundee, though I disagree with every word that has fallen from him and from every Scotch Member who has spoken. What with Scotch Members, Irish Members, and Welsh Members the unfortunate English Member never has an opportunity of expressing his views in this House, or of getting any sort of English legislation. Hon. Gentlemen from Scotland tell us that only 20 of their number are here. Where are the others? The answer is "Oh! they did not know that Scotch business was to be brought on." Well, let me tell hon. Members from Scotland that their duty when they are elected to this House is not only to come here when the Scotch business is on. The duty of every Member on this side of the House, no matter where he comes from, is to help Ministers to carry on good legislation, and to do their best to hinder them from carrying on bad legislation. We always have this sort of appeal from Scotch and Irish Members when the holidays are coming on—

that Scotch and Irish business shall not be taken either immediately before or immediately after the holidays. The unfortunate English Members, in whatever part of the country they may live, have to come here to make a House and proceed with business. It is just as disagreeable to them as it is to Scotch Members to have to come here when they want to be at home. English Members object to it as much as the Scotch Members. I shall vote for the Motion, however, for the reason given by the right hon. Member for Wolverhampton. We have a right to a whole day's discussion on Motions, on the first day the Question for the Speaker leaving the Chair is put, on the Army, the Navy, and the Civil Service Estimates. It is said that the Motion now before the House will not occupy more than an hour and a half, but I very much doubt that, with 20 Scotch Members present. I always listen with great interest to Scotch Members, but I am bound to say that when one Scotchman gets up half a dozen others follow him, and generally repeat what he has said, or "strengthen his arguments." Seeing that there has been some misunderstanding, and that we want to have an opportunity of discussing the second Order of the Day, I venture to suggest to the right hon. Gentleman that he should accept the Motion.

(5.16.) MR. W. E. GLADSTONE (Edinburgh, Mid Lothian): I entirely acquit the right hon. Gentleman of any departure from an understanding, but it is evident that there has been a belief in such an understanding, and important Members who are deeply interested in the question have left London in that opinion. But, still it remains a contested matter, while the good faith of the right hon. Gentleman has not been brought in question at all. He has been appealed to on the ground of an understanding, of courtesy, and of favour. I will appeal to the right hon. Gentleman on less lofty grounds, namely, those of interest in connection with the progress of the business of the House. I submit that the great interest of the Government, as the representative of the public in this matter, is to get the Speaker out of the Chair to-night for the consideration of the Civil Service Estimates. I think it is generally admitted that the practice of giving an evening for the discussion of all these questions before entering into Committee on the Estimates is a reasonable one. The right hon. Gentleman will see, on looking at the list of Motions, that there is ample motive for fair and legitimate discussion; but, for my own part, what I am afraid of is, that if we waste much time in this preliminary matter and come to the discussion of the names of the Committee without being in a harmonious frame of mind, and then pass to the consideration of the Speaker leaving the Chair, it is doubtful whether the Speaker will be allowed to leave the Chair to-night. I hope that in the general interests of the House the right hon. Gentleman will see his way to consent to the adjournment of the Debate.

*(5.18.) MR. W. H. SMITH: The right hon. Gentleman urges the Government to make this concession on the ground that it will forward public business. I own that is a very strong ground indeed. The right hon. Member for Wolverhampton says that the Debate ought not to take more than an hour and a half, and that he will do everything in his power to limit the discussion to a reasonable period. Upon the understanding which I think I have obtained from the other side of the House, including hon. Gentlemen from Scotland, that assistance will be given to the Government in bringing the Debate to a speedy termination, I will put the Order down for Thursday, April 9th, as the first Order of the Day. With regard to proceeding with the Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill, it is a serious matter to postpone a measure of that description; but I accept the assurance which has been given, and consent to the adjournment of the Debate.

Question put, and agreed to.

Debate adjourned till Thursday 9th April.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

SALE OF GLEBES.

*(5.20.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I shall not occupy the attention of the House at any great length, as the question I have to submit lies in a nutshell, and after the Debate on the Small Holdings Bill and the speech of the President of the Board of Agriculture (Mr. Chaplin) I am quite sure he will approach the subject with which I have to deal in a friendly and sympathetic spirit. One of the main objects of the Sale of Glebes Act was to promote the acquisition of plots of land by cottagers and labourers in rural districts. In 1888 a measure was introduced into the House of Lords to enable the sale of glebes, and when the Bill came down to that House it slipped through its various stages without observation till it reached the Third Reading. At that stage it came under my notice, and I moved to re-commit the Bill for the purpose of adding two clauses. One aimed at greater publicity, requiring that before the sale of a glebe there should be public inquiry in the parish, so that the villagers and labourers might become purchasers; the other to enable a portion of the purchase money to be left on mortgage, repayable by instalments. The Secretary for War (Mr. E. Stanhope), who had charge of the Bill, objected to my proposal, and it was rejected. I then moved the rejection of the Bill, stating that in my belief no sales would ever take place to labouring people under the measure as it stood, and that it would be futile and useless for the object it had in view. The Secretary of State for War replied that—

> "The Government desired these glebes should be sold in small plots, and he had no hesitation in saying that he believed the measure, in many parts of the country, would not only enable them to be sold in small plots, but would lead to their being acquired by labourers."

More than two years have now elapsed since the passing of the Act, and a recent Return laid before the House shows that my predictions have been verified. 75 glebes have been sold, and there are about 50 more in various stages of negotiation. Of the 75 glebes 67 have been sold in single lots, 45 to the principal landowner of the district; only four have been sold in six or more lots; and not a single lot has been sold to a labouring man or artisan. The Act has, therefore, failed in respect of one of its main objects. To what extent that failure might have been avoided by the administration of the Board of Agriculture I am unable to say, but I cannot but think that the Board might, to some extent if not wholly, have remedied the defects of the Act. One of the principal causes of its failure has been the want of publicity. My proposal was that there should be a meeting in the parish at which the wishes of the people might be ascertained. Although the Act contains no clause on this point I hold it would be quite within the competence of the Land Commission to direct an inquiry of this kind to be held. Publicity, I believe, is now given by means of notices exhibited on the Church doors and at the Post Office previous to the sale of glebe land, but no local inquiry is held. Then, again, with regard to leaving any of the purchase money on mortgage. In a rural district very few labourers or village artisans would be able to advance the whole of the purchase money. I do not know whether the Land Commissioners would have power to make any arrangement of this kind, but when the failure of the Act in this respect becomes manifest, I think the President of the Board of Agriculture should have applied for an amending Act, and arrangements might be made through the Ecclesiastical Commission for allowing a portion of the purchase money to remain on mortgage. In some cases, no doubt, the glebes are in position unsuitable for small holdings, remote from the village; but in such cases, where they are bought by the principal landowner of the district, arrangements might be made for the exchange for other land more suitable for the purpose. There is a very good illustration of this in the case of the glebe of Abinger. In this case the glebe was in the centre of a residential property, remote from the village, and unsuitable for many reasons for labourers' allotments or cottages. On the other hand, there is the greatest want in other parts of the parish of land suitable for cottages and gardens for the labouring people. The principal owner of the parish, who desired to acquire the glebe, offered to exchange land near to the village of equal value more suitable for small plots. This was refused. The public opinion of the district was very adverse to the sale of the glebe without such exchange, and the Vestry passed a resolution against it. On the other hand, the rector called a ticket meeting of his friends, and sent a deputation of them to the Land Commission. The Land Commission refused the offer of the landowner, and the land was sold by auction for villa residences at a considerable price. The income of the rector, already quite sufficient for his duties, was largely increased, but no public benefit resulted from the sale; no plots have been sold to the labouring people, and there is greater difficulty than ever in providing cottages and gardens for the labouring people in the village. The correspondence in this case, and especially the letters of Sir Thomas Farrer to the Board of Agriculture, would throw a great deal of light on the subject; but the President of the Board of Agriculture has refused to lay them before the House. In another case, a letter which I have recently received from a small village tradesman will show the kind of difficulty which exist in carrying out the intentions of the Act. He writes to me—

> "I see by the papers that you intend to speak in Parliament about the sale of glebes. In this parish all the land and houses in the village belong to our squire. Many of the village tradesmen and labourers would like to be independent and to be owners of small plots of land to cultivate or build on, and some have money to do so and others if helped by loans. But when the glebe here was to be sold it was put about that the squire meant to buy at any price, and we thought it useless to compete with him or to offer for the land. We think a preference should be given to people in our position in such a case, at a fair market value."

I could illustrate my case by other communications I have received, complaining of want of publicity and of want of facilities. It is not, however, necessary to go further into detail. It cannot be denied that the Act that has totally failed in respect of one of its main objects. It is not necessary to decide whether this is due to the defect of the Act or the defect of its administration. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Agriculture has announced that the Government intend to introduce a measure for facilitating the acquisition of small holdings. I think he will agree with me that until that measure is carried, and until District Councils are formed which can facilitate such purchases by loans we ought not to allow any more of these glebes to be sold. For my part, I hold that these lands in mortmain afford by far the best opportunity for trying an experiment in this direction, and think not an acre of them should be sold for the present except for this purpose. I am certain, also, that Parliament would never have allowed the Sale of Glebes Act to pass unless it had been assured that it would result in the multiplication of small owners, and if it had foreseen that it could merely add to the existing land monopoly. Under these circumstances, I feel certain that I can appeal with confidence to the Government to accept the spirit of my Motion.

Amendment proposed,

> To leave out from the word "That" to the end of the Question, in order to add the words "the sale of Glebes under 'The Glebe Lands Act, 1888,' should be suspended until greater facilities are afforded for their purchase in small plots by agricultural labourers and artisans, in accordance with the intentions of the Act,"—(*Mr. Shaw Lefevre,*)

—instead thereof.

Question proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*(5.44.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I am glad the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford has brought this subject before the House. The main principle of the Act of 1888 is to effect sales for the benefit of the benefices, and the Commissioners are bound to get the best prices they can, and the only way to obtain this is to put the land up to auction, when they are bound to accept the highest bidder, whether that offer is made by an adjoining landowner or any other solvent person. That, I consider, a great blot on the Bill of 1888. The second blot is that, after the land is sold, the incumbent or the owner of the advowson is obliged to invest the money under Section 4 in Railway Debentures or Metropolitan Board of Works Stock or Consols, which do not yield more than 3 per cent. interest, and therefore it necessarily follows that the incumbent must get a high price for the land, a price above the real

agricultural value, in order that he may not be a loser in his income through having to invest in Stock paying such a low rate of interest. I would suggest to Her Majesty's Government that they should amend this, and it would really be in favour of the incumbent——

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must not proceed to discuss Amendments of the Act; the question now is the administration of the Act, the expenses of which are voted in Committee of Supply.

*SIR J. SWINBURNE: I will only point out that distinctly there would be an advantage in giving publicity to these sales by means of advertisement, and also I think an inquiry might be held prior to a sale of glebe which anybody interested might attend. A large portion of the purchase money also might be allowed to remain on mortgage. I do not agree altogether with the suggestion that the operation of the Act should be suspended immediately; because the great bulk of the glebe lands which have been sold have been a long way from the villages and are quite unfit for occupation by labourers. It is quite impossible for a labouring man to take an allotment for cultivation more than a mile from his cottage. In a great number of cases an adjoining proprietor has bought the land because it lies in the middle of his property. Landed proprietors have not, unfortunately, usually a large balance at their bankers, and the natural result is that a proprietor has to sell other land in another part of his estate in order to provide the funds for the purchase of the glebe land because it is advantageously situated, thus indirectly leading to small portions of land, situated suitably for allotments and small holdings, being thrown upon the market. The real fact is, these glebe lands are sold to the best advantage of the incumbent, and so long as the Act is in its present form I do not see how its operation can be otherwise.

*(5.48.) MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I think we are indebted to the right hon. Gentleman for bringing this matter forward. There is no doubt that the Glebe Lands Act of 1888 was primarily a measure of relief for the clergy. That was the intention and object of the Act. Clergymen had glebe lands unlet in various parts of England, and the difficulty was to cultivate this land. In some cases a large part of the income of the clergy is derived from these lands; that is to say, at the time of the commutation of tithe land was transferred in lieu of tithe, and the glebe in some parishes is very considerable. In consequence of the agricultural depression the clergy have been unable to let the land, and being unacquainted with agricultural operations, and being short of capital the result has been the land has been a considerable incumbrance instead of being a source of income. So the Act was passed for the purpose of affording the clergy in such cases the opportunity of getting rid of the property. No doubt there was an idea in the minds of some hon. Members, and, probably, more especially in the mind of the right hon. Gentleman who has brought forward this Motion, that the glebe land might be cut into small parcels and sold to agricultural labourers and others desirous of acquiring small holdings. That, no doubt, was in the minds of Members when the Act was passed; but I am afraid there is no machinery in the Act to enable that to be done effectively. The duty of the Commissioners is to sell the land at the best price they can obtain. That is their primary duty; but I think that they might, as far as possible, combine with the exercise of that duty encouragement to persons, who desire to cultivate small holdings, to come forward as purchasers. I do not know whether under the Act a portion of the purchase money might be left on the security of the land itself; but, if not, it is desirable that some provision of the kind should be embodied in an amending Act. This discussion may lead to the Government considering the desirability of amending the Act, giving power to the Board of Agriculture to make arrangements whereby glebe lands may be sold in small parcels to purchasers for amounts payable by convenient instalments. I appreciate the difficulty there is in making this Glebe Lands Act directly available for the creation of small holdings, but there was an idea that it would operate in that direction, and I hope the Government will seriously consider this matter in connection with their contemplated Bill, to facilitate the

creation of small holdings. In most cases the glebe is good land, and at a convenient distance from the village, thus fulfilling one of the conditions the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Chaplin) laid down the other day as absolutely essential in the creation of small holdings. I admit that when I read the Return of sales under the Act I was very much disappointed. I did hope that it would have led to small holdings, but, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, the land has been mainly sold in large parcels to adjoining owners. Now, that is an unsatisfactory result, for most of us desired that the number of small landowners should be increased, and the House has committed itself to a policy of devoting £5,000,000 for the creation of small holdings. It does seem to me, having gone so far, we might well give practical effect to that policy by turning our attention to these glebe lands. The Act is not working satisfactorily. The land has, no doubt, been sold at a good price, and the sales have been beneficial to the clergy; but the sales have been to large owners, not to that class of persons we desire to see in possession of land throughout the country. I believe the general feeling in the House will be in favour of an amendment of the Act by providing machinery which will enable the land to be sold in small parcels, and that the sales will be conducted after full notice, and with encouragement to persons of small means to become purchasers.

*(5.56.) MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I think the right hon. Gentleman is amply justified in raising this question, and the time is opportune when we remember that it is only a few days ago that the Government assented to the Second Reading of a Small Holdings Bill, and are themselves pledged to introduce a Bill of their own dealing with small holdings. The Glebe Lands Act was a wise and just measure. I know many clergymen who are good farmers, and many who are not, but whose benevolent intentions exceed their agricultural knowledge. To my knowledge many of them are promoting useful work among labourers in regard to allotments, but, as we are well aware, the great incentive to success in these small holdings is the prospect of being the owner. In position and in quality these glebe lands are generally well adapted for small holdings, and they should be brought within the reach of small purchasers. In the Return of Sales last year I see one instance in which glebe land of 47 acres was sold to ten purchasers for £712. This was in the parish of Landford, Wiltshire. It would be interesting to have some information as to this, apparently the only, instance in which the Act has been of use in bringing the land within the reach of landowners. In this Act we have the beginning of the use of the power of the State to transfer the land to those who wish to use it for agricultural purposes. There are between 600,000 and 700,000 acres of glebe lands, the rent of which is £900,000 or £1,000,000 a year. These lands form an important section of the country which we contemplate using in the development of the policy of small holdings. I hope this discussion will show on which side of the House there is a real and earnest desire to meet the wants of labourers in regard to giving them the most available lands. When we have seen Her Majesty's Government forced by political exigencies into accepting a small holdings proposal made by some of their dissentient Liberal friends, we may challenge them to say whether they will deal with the Glebe Lands Act and its administration by an amending Bill, which will provide machinery for rendering available for the labourers and small artisans of our villages lands which are most convenient and suitable to their use.

*(6.1.) MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): The right hon. Member for Bradford certainly deserves the thanks of the House for having inaugurated this discussion, and it is to be hoped what he has said may be taken to heart at the Board of Agriculture. It may be that the consideration which ought to be uppermost in the minds of the Land Commissioners is to sell the glebe lands to the highest bidder; but it seems doubtful whether Section 8 of the Glebe Lands Act does not militate against that view, and whether more strenuous efforts ought not to be made to secure a development of the system of small holdings out of the glebe lands. There is no doubt that the profit incumbents obtain by sale is considerably more than the profit they

make by farming the land themselves. Therefore, there is every inducement to incumbents to part with the glebes if the opportunity presents itself, and they would not be human if they resisted the temptation offered them. But I think a certain duty devolves upon the Board of Agriculture and the Land Commissioners, and that is to make every effort to secure that the utmost publicity is given to the sales. I would also like to ask the Board of Agriculture whether they will not consider some scheme by which a portion of the purchase money may in certain cases remain on mortgage? If the President of the Board of Agriculture could accept such a provision, I think the Act might be turned to some good account; otherwise, the probability is, that much of the property which consists of glebe lands will be sacrificed. Amongst the records of sale there is one to which attention has been called already. It was the case of 38 acres of land at Saxlingham, Norfolk. The land was sold for £112, or rather less than £3 per acre. That was a ridiculously small sum, and perhaps the right hon. Gentleman could give the House some further information in regard to the matter. Unless the circumstances were extremely exceptional, I cannot but think, if there had been more publicity given of the sale, some person would have been willing to purchase some portion of the glebe lands for the purposes of small holdings. It is only in the case of land situated in or near villages that there is a probability of land being wanted for small holdings; and until there is an increasing demand, and an increasing demand can only arise owing to increased publicity being given to the sales, and facilities being afforded for the acquisition of the land, the President of the Board of Agriculture might well consider whether the proposition of the right hon. Member for Bradford would not be that which would in the long run be most conducive not only to the interest of the benefices themselves, but also of those who are to be created small holders.

*(6.10.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. CHAPLIN, Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I have no cause whatever to complain of the tone of the Debate, and I sympathise very much with a great deal which has fallen from hon. Gentlemen opposite. I share their regret that one of the objects which Parliament had in view in passing the Glebe Lands Act has not been effected. It is true one of the objects the promoter had in view, not the main object, in which the right hon. Gentleman was not quite accurate, was to provide facilities for acquiring small portions of land by cottagers and others, and, though it is not accurate to say that there is no case in which it has occurred, it is the fact that out of the entire number of sales we have only two instances in which the land has come into the hands of the labouring classes. I wish, however, to correct some misapprehensions with reference to the administration of the Act. According to the right hon. Gentleman, no sufficient notice is given when glebe lands are sold. Unless I am entirely misinformed, ample notice has been given on every occasion; so much so that, according to one of the Reports submitted to the House, the actual form of the notice was published in each case. The section of the Act was quoted, and communications from the residents in the neighbourhood on the question of the proposed sale were invited. Having inquired into the matter myself, I believe that, so far as notice is concerned, everything has been done that can be done under the terms of the Act for the promotion of the acquisition of small holdings. The right hon. Gentleman has called attention to the case of Abinger. If I had had notice from the right hon. Gentleman I should have been able to deal with the case much more fully and satisfactorily than is possible at a moment's notice. As no fewer than 108 sales of glebes have taken place since the Act came into force, it is manifestly impossible for me to carry all the particulars in my head. In the case of Abinger, the right hon. Gentleman said that a great opportunity was lost. The right hon. Gentleman must be entirely misinformed, for I myself know perfectly well that a long and somewhat acrimonious correspondence occurred between the incumbent and the Board of Agriculture before I was in charge of that Department. I remember that in one of his letters the incumbent stated that there was no land suitable for allotments.

I believe that some of the land was suitable for artisans of the higher class.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: What I stated was that the land itself was unsuitable, but that a great proprietor of the district was ready to exchange for it land which was extremely suitable.

*MR. CHAPLIN: I believe that is quite accurate. The landed proprietor referred to was perfectly willing to give facilities, and the Board of Agriculture was exceedingly desirous that it should be done, but, owing to unfortunate disputes in the parish between some of the residents, the only thing that could be done was to put the land up to auction at the best price that cou'd be got, and unfortunately none was obtained for allotments. The right hon. Gentleman is of opinion that the Board of Agriculture should give a preferential right to labourers. [Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: At fair market value.] Then I fail to see how you are to give a preferential right. If we had adopted this course there would have been good ground for complaining of the administration of the Act, because it is expressly provided in the Act that before the land is offered in small parcels, or to the Local Authority for the purpose of small holdings, the Board of Agriculture is to be satisfied that the price of the land will not be diminished thereby. How, then, would it be possible, in accordance with the terms of the Act, to give a preferential right to agricultural labourers or any other class? To do so would be acting in opposition to the terms of the Act, and had I adopted the course which he suggests to me, then, indeed, the Board would have been deserving of the censure which he passes upon it. I should like to put before the House what are the precise facts with which we have to deal. Since the Act came into force in 1888 glebe land belonging to 64 different benefices in 24 English and in three Welsh counties have been sold in 108 different lots, making an average of 12½ acres. The sum realised by these sales was £81,845, averaging £60 per acre, and affording an increase in the income of the 64 benefices of something like 60 per cent. Let me remind the House that the first object of the promoters of the Act was to benefit incumbents. The view of the promoters was that, in consequence of the long period of agricultural depression and the great hardship suffered by the clergy, some efforts should be made for their relief, and a Bill was introduced in order to enable them to sell glebe lands. As far as that part of the Act is concerned it cannot, therefore, be contended that it has been a failure. And then as to the wider distribution of the land in small parcels there remains the fact that 108 sales have been effected with the general result that the average purchases have been 12½ acres. Although I admit that that does not prove that parts of these lands have been sold to the agricultural classes, it cannot be said that the Act has failed in the degree many hon Gentlemen have said. The right hon. Gentleman took some credit to himself for his prescience in predicting that unless some additions were made to the Act it would be a failure. I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that it was the Prime Minister who first drew attention to this. His proposal was that more land, if possible, should be brought within the reach of the agricultural classes throughout the country, and this scheme was propounded as a means of dealing with glebe lands and to see whether this object could not be attained.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I said that Lord Salisbury had first propounded the idea of selling glebe lands for the purpose of making labourers' holdings.

*MR. CHAPLIN: Yes; but the Prime Minister took occasion at the same time to offer a word of warning as to whether on economic grounds it was likely that any great quantity of land would in the long run pass into the hands of the agricultural labourers, and he expressed great doubt upon that point. The fact is, that if people do not want or are unable to buy land, no legislation which can be passed will compel them to buy it. The proposals of hon. Gentlemen opposite are to the effect that money should be left to be paid by instalments. Why? Because it is for a great public object. Very good; then the burden should be borne by the public, not by the State; and it should not fall on the unfortunate incumbent, who may possibly need his money for other purposes.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: The right hon. Gentleman misunderstands my proposition. My suggestion was that money should be left on mortgage and might be repaid by instalments. It never occurred to me to deprive the incumbent of reasonable interest on the unpaid instalments.

*MR. CHAPLIN: I never supposed that the hon. Member intended to go as far as that, but the Act provides certain methods in which the purchase-money may be invested; and the hon. Member suggests that, instead of the money being invested in the manner prescribed by the Act, it should be invested and left to be paid by instalments, on a security which the incumbent may not consider to be a good one, and which is not provided for in the Act. What is the kind of security offered to the incumbent? When allotments and small holdings were provided at first, they were exceedingly popular; but that is not always the case. I was talking only yesterday to a great proprietor in the Midlands, not a member of the Tory Party, but a man of advanced and even of extreme opinions, belonging to the Party who sit on that side of the House; and he told me of a case where many small holdings and allotments were made by him a few years ago, in order to satisfy a demand then current in this neighbourhood. This demand has fallen off since then, and the small holdings have been given up and thrown on his hands. That might be the experience of the incumbents, who might eventually be saddled with various half-acres of land as a security, which might turn out to be of very little value. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Shaw Lefevre) proposes that the Act should be suspended until greater facilities have been provided for the acquisition of land by agricultural labourers. I should be glad to consider any plan for promoting such facilities, although I cannot say that I have received much information, or derived much encouragement from anything that has fallen upon that point from hon. Gentlemen opposite to-night; but I do not think that the absence of these facilities offers any justification for the proposal to suspend the operation of the Act for the future. In its main object the Act has certainly not been unsuccessful. The right hon. Gentleman was correct in saying that there were 600,000 acres of glebe land in this country which could be sold under the Act. In three years, out of 600,000 acres, all that have been sold are 1,200 acres for £81,000. Even supposing we proceed at that rate of progress for the next five or ten years, there will still be quite sufficient glebe land left for the future to come under the operation of any plan to be devised to meet the views of Gentlemen opposite, and I certainly can see no justification for accepting the Motion, which would have the effect of suspending the operation of the Act. I must therefore oppose the Resolution.

*(6.30.) MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I have only risen to raise a point on which I shall be glad if the President of the Local Government Board would say a word or two. I cannot quite agree with the arguments of my right hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. Shaw Lefevre). No doubt this Act was passed in order to benefit the incumbents, and I understand that it has done so, because the incumbents were formerly exposed to great trouble and anxiety, and occasionally had to suffer a good deal of poverty in consequence of the great uncertainty which existed as to the amounts they were to receive, and the small amounts they did obtain at times as compared with what they had anticipated. Since the Act has been passed an Incumbent, when he sells his glebe, is not subject to the uncertainty which formerly attached to the annual value of the agricultural land. He gets a certain income, and he knows whether it is large or small, and what arrangements he can make. I agree that it is the duty of the Commissioners under the Act to get the utmost value they can for the property, and I should be very sorry if the labourers, simply because they happen to be poor, were to be allowed to buy land at a less price than other people. I do not agree with the suggestion as to leaving a portion of the purchase-money on mortgage. I do not think that that is desirable in the case of the labouring men, and further I think it clear, as pointed out by the Minister for Agriculture, that if the money were allowed to remain on mortgage, either wholly or in part, one of the main objects of the Act would be defeated. If the money was left on mortgage, one of the requirements of the Act that the Commissioners should invest it at the request of the incumbent in buy-

ing other land could not be carried out; but the point I wish to bring before the House is this: Under Section 8 of the Act there is a difference between Sub-section 1 and Sub-section 2. Sub-section 1 says it shall be the duty of the Land Commissioners, in giving their approval to a sale under this Act, to require that the land or some part of it shall be offered in small portions, or that they shall sell it to the Sanitary Authority of the district for allotment purposes under the Act of 1887. It also says that they are to satisfy themselves in every case that such offer is not at a lower price than can be obtained for such agricultural land. Sub-section 2 gives directions for certain notices of sale to be given, and it seems to me that that sub-section does not override Sub-section 1, and that it is the duty of the Commissioners in every case either to offer the land for sale in small parcels, or if they do not do that, to satisfy themselves that the Sanitary Authority of the district does not wish to purchase the land at a price which is not less than would be obtained from other persons for the same property. I wish to ask the President of the Local Government Board this question: whether in all these cases the Rural Sanitary Authority has had the opportunity given to it by the Commissioners of purchasing this land under the Act of 1887? because if this has not been done it is clear the Act has not been administered as it was intended to be administered.

(6.35.) MR. HALLEY STEWART (Lincolnshire, Spalding): Before the right hon. Gentleman rises to answer the question put by my hon. Friend, I wish to raise this point as to the administration of the Act. Assuming the answer to my hon. Friend's question to be in the affirmative, would it not be practicable to combine with the Act the suggestions that have been made from this Bench as to the Sanitary Authority being enabled to undertake payments by instalments for the land which is purchased for agricultural and labourers' allotments. Although it might be impossible for incumbents to sell their land to Tom, Dick, or Harry, and run the risk of his credit, it would be a totally different thing if, instead of substituting the individual agricultural labourer as the creditor of the glebe, you were to substitute the Sanitary Authority, because the Sanitary Authority is able to borrow money from the Government on the security of the rates of the district. If it is good enough for the Government to lend money to the Sanitary Authority, surely it is good enough for the incumbent to accept this arrangement.

*MR. SPEAKER: I must point out to the hon. Gentleman that he is now advocating an alteration of the Act of Parliament, which is going beyond the scope of the Resolution that has been submitted to the House.

MR. HALLEY STEWART: I am much obliged to you, Mr. Speaker, for the correction, but although I may not have made myself clear, I was merely suggesting that there is within the four corners of the Act sufficient power for the Commissioners to lend to the Sanitary Authority, and that they might be forgiven for doing so, inasmuch as it may have been the intention of the Act that this should be done.

*(6.38.) MR. CHAPLIN: I can only speak again by the indulgence of the House. But perhaps I may be allowed to reply to the questions addressed to the Government. I speak from memory, but I believe I am right in saying that in every case where a glebe has been sold it has been invariably offered, either in small parcels, or to the Local Authority, for the purpose of allotments in the first instance. I may also add that there have been several cases in which invitations have been sent to the Sanitary Authority, but in which there has not only been no response to the invitation, but where the answer sent back has been that they preferred to have nothing to do with it.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I am afraid that what I have said with regard to the sale of the land has been misunderstood. I did not intend to intimate that the land should be sold for less than its true value. In fact, I maintained that the land ought to be sold at its full value, and that the proper way of carrying it out would be to ascertain, in the first place, what the full value was, and then to offer it to the agricultural labourers of the district at that value. Unless this is done, and the land then put up to auction in the district, my belief is that the agricultural labourers will not be able to purchase. But after the speech which has just fallen from the right hon. Gentleman opposite, who gave no hope of any alteration being made in the Act, or of the introduction of any other measure, for the purpose of amending it, I must divide the House upon the Resolution.

(6.42.) The House divided:—Ayes 131; Noes 67.—(Div. List, No. 101.)

Main Question again proposed.

FOREIGN OFFICE AND DIPLOMATIC SERVICE.

(6.41.) MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I desire to take this opportunity, which may not recur for a long time, to call attention to the Report of the Royal Commission on Civil Establishments, so far as it affects the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, although I shall, of course, be unable to move the Resolution which I put upon the Paper—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, effect ought to be given to the recommendations of the Royal Commission relating to improvements in the organisation of the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service."

The uncertainty of obtaining another opportunity renders it desirable that we should bring this matter before the House with the view of obtaining from the Ministry some statement which will put us in a better position to discuss the question when it arises on the Vote. The first and most important point is the recommendation of the Commission that the Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service should be fused into one Service. Hon. Members will find the suggestion in the 25th paragraph of the Report of the Royal Commission. An analysis of the evidence is given which will enable hon. Members to see what data the Commissioners proceeded upon. The advantages of the fusion would be mainly two. There would be great convenience in having a constant transference from home to abroad, and from abroad home. By that means the man who has to do the work would have the advantage of knowing what diplomatic work is like on foreign missions; and the man on foreign missions would have an understanding of how foreign questions present themselves here, and an appreciation of the views taken in this country. In that way I think the Public Service would be benefited, and we would procure a higher measure of competence in each class. There would, too, be a better and more general promotion in the Service. It is always found that a certain number of men, after a few years' service, develop a special talent for one or other branch of the Service, though it may not be the one into which they first entered. It seems desirable that as soon as the man of special talent becomes known to the Secretary of State, he should be able to send him to the work for which he is most fitted. In that way you would better carry on promotion than is now possible. At present promotion is so slow as to be discouraging, and the man of talent loses the interest and energy which he ought to possess, considering the importance of his functions. Promotion is apt to be extremely slow in the Foreign Office, and in particular parts of the Diplomatic Service. The salaries, too, are very low, so that it is a long time before a man can hope to derive any income from his talents. That being the fact, anything which tends to improve the career of a public servant in the Foreign Office or Diplomatic Service, and which tends to accelerate promotion by making the whole field wider, is clearly an advantage. It is with the view, too, of enabling a greater number of men to be got than is now obtained, that I hope the recommendation of the Royal Commission will be carried out. These are the arguments which seem to have commended themselves to the Royal Commission, and it follows from the fusion which they recommend that there should be one Examination Staff. At present, though there is a competitive examination, it is an examination by nomination. A candidate has to obtain the nomination of the Secretary of State before he is admitted to compete. But the number of places to be filled up is always such that there is no competition between the nominated candidates. The Commissioners do not seem to have considered it desirable to alter the system of nomination, and, as some of the witnesses concurred in that view, I do not propose to bring it before the House. I will assume that there ought to be nominations in the first instance, and that the number nominated would necessarily be limited. But the union of the two Services would necessarily tend to raise diplomatic examination to a higher level than that which now obtains. It might, therefore, be necessary to contemplate the offering of further inducements to men to enter the Diplomatic Service than are now proffered. In the first place attachés on receiving an appointment get no salary for two years, and the salary given after that period is low, besides which candidates are informed that they must have private means to enable them to meet the expense of living at foreign Courts. Clearly, to carry out the change which the Commissioners re-commit, would involve an increase of expenditure. I hope it will be found desirable to pay members of the Diplomatic Service on a somewhat better scale, so as not to make necessary the requirement that the candidate must be prepared to invest £400 a year. It would be a distinct gain to the Public Service, because it would widen the area from which diplomatists are drawn. Considering the many important and delicate questions that have to be dealt with, as well as questions affecting our commerce, I do not think we at present draw enough talent into the Diplomatic Service. I believe that in the interests of the country it has become of increasing importance that we should endeavour to attract men of first-rate talent to the Diplomatic Service. How is this to be done without imposing an additional burden on the Treasury? I think it might be done to a very large extent, if not completely, by various retrenchments in the present Diplomatic and Foreign Office Service. I will mention a few of these. It is a question of great intricacy, and therefore I will not go into much detail. For one thing, the salaries of some of our Ambassadors might be reduced. It is true that they are paid liberally by reason of the costly residences they have to keep up and the hospitality they have to exercise. Instead of the palaces of official residences in which they are housed — residences erected at large initial cost, and requiring great annual cost for repairs—it would be well to be content with more modest accommodation. We might also intimate to our Ambassadors that they need not keep up so large a scale of hospitality as they have done, and that they need not consider it their duty to ask every Englishman who comes with a letter of introduction to a State dinner. I believe we might also effect a certain number of retrenchments by not keeping up Missions at such places as Munich and Darmstadt. The Royal Commission in its Report stated that these Missions might be reduced. They have really no longer any political object. The main policy of Germany is all centred in Berlin, and our Ambassador there is perfectly able to conduct every negotiation. I think a saving might also be effected by abolishing certain chaplaincies. Again, there might be a saving by re-arranging the Foreign Office Establishment. In the Foreign Office there are now three sets of clerks—the Permanent Establishment clerks, the Supplementary clerks and the Lower Division clerks. The Commission recommended that all distinctions between the Establishment clerks and the Supplementary clerks should cease; that the number of clerks of the higher class should be diminished, and that more work should be thrown on the Lower Division clerks. Clearly, as the scale of payment is very different, if that recomcommendation is carried out a considerable saving will be effected. The transference of work from the Upper to the Lower Division would lead to a considerable diminution of the Annual Charge. At present a great deal of the work done by the higher clerks is work of a purely mechanical and routine order, requiring no high intelligence, education, or talent. There are two objections to the system hitherto observed. The first is, that men of ability and distinction are paid for doing work for which no great ability or education is needed; and the second is, that by setting highly-trained and educated men to do purely mechanical work, they become dissatisfied with their work at the beginning of their life, when it is most important that they should learn to become interested in their work, and when their minds should be stimulated by having interesting work to do. There can be no greater mistake than that a young man should become wearied of his work and cease to care for it. Even apart, therefore, from the question of expense, it would be a considerable gain if the number of Upper Division clerks were diminished, and those retained were kept for the higher and more intellectual kind of work. This is the view of the Commissioners as contained in the 24th paragraph of the Report. I know it is sometimes objected that the Foreign Office work is largely confidential. But I do not believe that the Lower Division clerks will be found deficient in a sense of official honour, and unfit to be intrusted with confidential work; and, besides, it is, after all, not much of the work that is really confidential. The part of the work which is secret in this sense, that a newspaper would pay a high price to have it, is comparatively small, and it is only in rare cases that a powerful temptation could be brought to bear. I believe, therefore, there need be no alarm on that score. With regard to the Diplomatic Service, there is one point I should like to refer to. It would be a very great advantage if in every Embassy or Legation abroad there were some person to represent the permanent element, a person who would remain from year to year unchanged, and so prevent those difficulties which arise when new attachés come in and take up work with the earlier stages of which they are not acquainted. I know that there is a difference of opinion on this point, and that Lord Granville, in his Memorandum, threw some doubt on the advisability of adopting this plan; but if the House will look at the evidence and at the nature of the proposal, I think they would see the great advantage to be gained by its adoption. Lastly, I desire to say a few words on the Consular Service, as to which the Commissioners have reported in favour of certain changes. That Service is an extremely abnormal and accidental kind of Service. It is not a branch of the regular Civil Service. There is a light qualifying examination, and it is in the power of the Secretary of State to dispense even with that examination, and to exercise his patronage practically unchecked in connection therewith. He can give effect to private and political motives. I think the House will feel that it is very undesirable that in a branch of the Civil Service so important it should be open to the Secretary of State to give rewards to political supporters or find places for personal friends. The Service should be entered by examination; and if the Secretary of State ever makes an appointment outside the examination, he should be required to make a special Report giving reasons for such deviation from the usual practice, so that his action will be open, if necessary, to be discussed in the House. It is also desirable that those entering should have a career open to them, and that promotion should not be a merely haphazard matter. Consuls should be more generally promoted to better posts, in order that they may feel that merit is appreciated and rewarded. I am glad to know that the Commissioners have expressed themselves as satisfied with the manner in which the Consuls perform their duties. A few years ago complaints were made by the commercial community as to the alleged indifference of the Foreign Office and the Consuls to the promotion of British commercial interests abroad. These complaints were to a large extent refuted; but since then, no doubt partly owing to the action of Lord Rosebery when at the Foreign Office, the Consuls have been put on a new footing, fresh instructions have been issued for their guidance, the Board of Trade officially publish all commercial intelligence from them, and the Consuls certainly now perform their duties to the satisfaction of the British commercial community. It would, however, be well, as the Commissioners suggest, if the Consuls had more commercial training. The Commissioners have reported also on a number of other matters of detail, to which I shall not now refer; but it would be well if the right hon. Gentleman would lay before the House a statement showing what has been done to carry out the recommendations of the Commission, and on what grounds the Secretary of State differs from the recommendations of the Commissioners which have not been carried out.

(7.22.) Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I think that the suggested fusion between the Diplomatic Service and the Foreign Office would entail far greater changes than the hon. Gentleman appears to contemplate. The fact is, that many men enter the Foreign Office who have no private means, for they can in London live on their salaries, whereas it is quite impossible for attachés abroad to do so. They are not merely clerks to the Ambassador, but in the position of his aides-de-camp. They have to go into society and maintain a certain position. I believe it is still deemed necessary to insist that a young man appointed as attaché should have a guaranteed private income of £400 a year. I very much doubt whether any attaché does live on £400 a year; if he is to live up to the style of his colleagues he must spend £600 or £700 a year. My hon. Friend says—"Then pay him more." Does he mean pay them £600 or £700 a year? because if you do that, you will have to put all the clerks in the Foreign Office on the same footing. If this fusion were to take place, it would be necessary to pay the Foreign Office clerks at the rate of about £600 a year so as to enable them to take up the position of attachés. The fact is, that these young men who enter the Diplomatic Service and work for such small salaries do so, not merely because they thus get into good foreign society and lead an agreeable life, but because they look forward to becoming in time Ambassadors and Plenipotentiaries themselves, with big salaries and considerable pensions. It is the very same reason which, as Sydney Smith said, induced men to act as curates and humble clergymen; they look forward to getting fat livings and to becoming Bishops. How does my hon. Friend propose to carry out this fusion without an increase in these salaries?

MR. BRYCE: I realise that the change will involve some extra expense, but I suggest it may be met by retrenchments in other matters.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No doubt certain retrenchments might be made, but I believe that if the Commissioners had taken the trouble to make out an estimate they would have found the increased expenditure would nearly, if not quite, outweigh the saving. There certainly is great opportunity for reduction. Our Ambassadors at St. Petersburg and Rome are overpaid, being paid more than those of any other country. It is said they have to dispense a great amount of hospitality. I have been in the Diplomatic Service, and I never saw this reckless hospitality. The real expense is incurred in keeping up a position equal in style to that of the inhabitants of the country. But I would do away entirely with Ambassadors. All that is required might be easily well done by a Minister-resident, and, where commercial interests are involved, by a Consul. Before the time of telegraphs it was necessary to have abroad to represent us a man of great position and political eminence. But now an Ambassador has very little initiative. He is always telegraphing to the Foreign Office and it to him. The supposed advantage of an Ambassador over a Minister Plenipotentiary is that he has a right to an interview with the Monarch. But nowadays that is no real advantage; for if the Minister Plenipotentiary asked an audience, no doubt the Monarch would grant one. All that is wanted is a good business man as Minister-resident. Then we could do away with attachés and aides-de-camps, and there need be no compulsion to go into society. What amount does my hon. Friend propose to give these young men? If he intends to give them £700 or £800 it is obvious he must give it to all, whether they are in the Foreign Office or the Diplomatic Service, a proceeding which would be exceedingly expensive. My hon. Friend alluded to the Consular Service, and I am surprised he did not propose that that Service should be fused with the Diplomatic Service.

MR. BRYCE: The proposal was made and rejected.

MR. LABOUCHERE: When any sensible suggestion is made one generally hears it is rejected. Why was it rejected? Because, no doubt, the Consular Service is a happy home for the friends of gentlemen in power. There is an examination, but it means nothing. In France there is a different system. There is a fusion between the Diplomatic Service and the Consular Service. The French do not take gentlemen who are broken down in business and in health, but they start men in the Consular Service, just as they start them in the Diplomatic Service. Gentlemen start as Consular cadets, and these are to the Consuls what attachés are to the Minister. They rise to be Vice Consuls and afterwards to be Consuls, and if I remember right there are three different grades of Consuls. It frequently happens that instead of going on in the Consular Service a man will pass into the Diplomatic Service; whilst many gentlemen who are in the French Diplomatic Service, when they get a certain age, wish to be at the head of a Department, and pass again into the Consular Service. I therefore ask the Under Secretary to give us some explanation of the views of the Government in regard to Ambassadors, as to the possibility of merging the Consular Service in the Diplomatic Service, as to what salary attachés or clerks in the Foreign Office should commence at, and as to whether it is still necessary to exact the assurance that a gentleman entering the Service should have £400 or £500 of his own.

(7.35.) **Mr. LEGH** (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): As a former member of the Diplomatic Service, there is one portion of the speech of the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) with which I most thoroughly agree, namely, that portion in which he expressed the hope that the Diplomatic Service would in future be protected from the interference of outsiders. The practice of introducing outsiders has almost attained to the proportions of a scandal. The hon. Member for Northampton remarked that the Consular Service has become a sort of refuge for the friends of persons in power, and that the Diplomatic Service has literally been turned into the home of rest for decayed or distressed politicians, and in that I agree with him. But I feel bound to add that is the only friendly sentiment the hon. Member expressed towards the Diplomatic Service. I may possibly be somewhat prejudiced on this question, but I maintain there is no great difference, on the whole, between those in the Diplomatic Service and the clerks in the Foreign Office. If I mistake not, the hon. Member for Northampton was once in the Diplomatic Service. When he entered it probably the examination was not one of a very severe character, and yet I presume there would be few people who would be disposed to express the opinion that the hon. Member is not equal to the average Foreign Office clerk in ability or in anything else. Now, the most important change which is advocated by the Commission is the fusion between the Consular and Diplomatic Services. Anyone who has had experience of either of the Services must have come to the conclusion that that fusion is eminently desirable. Even the Foreign Office clerks, who are so superior

to the members of the Diplomatic Service, will no doubt improve under a system of fusion. It is anticipated that two distinct advantages will result from fusion. In the first place, it is said promotion will be more rapid. I sincerely hope it will: it cannot possibly be slower than it is now. Another advantage anticipated is that young attachés will not be sent abroad on their supposed £400 a year, which many of them do not possess, but will be immediately provided with a salary. It is not clear how the money for the salary is to be found, but I suppose the salary for the attaché is to be taken out of the salary of the Ambassador, who is to meet the matter by reducing his hospitality. I desire to refer to what the right hon. Gentleman said as to the way in which young attachés are employed. On entering the Service they are, under the present system, employed for a year at the Foreign Office. It is perfectly true their work consists in a great measure of copying, which may almost be described as purely mechanical work. They copy Despatches and decipher telegrams, but the Despatches are of a most interesting, confidential character, and the telegrams they decipher contain the whole pith and marrow of the questions which are uppermost at the moment. So far from the work discouraging persons to join the Service I cannot imagine anything that would give them a more rapid insight into their work. The hon. Gentleman (Mr. Bryce) appears to think that their time is thrown away on work of this kind, and that it might properly be delegated to clerks of an inferior description—to what I believe are called Lower Division clerks. As far as I know, experience with regard to Lower Division clerks is not a particular happy one. If I mistake not, no Lower Division clerks were occupied until there was great pressure of business in 1877. On that occasion Mr. Marvin was introduced. Such a result might occur on a future occasion.

Mr. BRYCE: Mr. Marvin was not a Lower Division clerk, but a person brought in from outside.

Mr. LEGH: I confess I do not see much difference. Mr. Marvin was introduced, and the results were particularly unfortunate. Under the circumstances, I should be very reluctant to alter the present system.

(7.41.) **MR. H. H. FOWLER** (Wolverhampton, E.): As I am one of those Commissioners of whom the hon. Member for Northampton has so low an opinion, I may say that the Commission devoted a considerable amount of time to the organisation and work of the Foreign Office. We received answers to something like 4,000 questions as to the work and organisation of the Foreign Office, and not one of the points raised to-night failed to receive fair consideration and examination. I wish to ask the Under Secretary a question, and so emphasise the appeal made by the hon. Member for Aberdeen—whether the Foreign Office intend, in the shape of a Minute or Memorandum, to take any course with regard to the recommendations of the Commission? We made 54 separate recommendations, and I think it is due to a body of gentlemen who devoted a large amount of time and attention to a careful examination of these public questions that some official notice should be taken of their recommendations. I think the Commission on Civil Establishments have some reason to complain of the mode in which their recommendations have been treated by the Government as a whole. With reference, to the Foreign Office, the Commission was very careful to recognise the exceptional peculiarities of the administration. The Commission entirely dissented from many of the views expressed by the hon. Member for Northampton, and I do not think there is in any one of our recommendations any point on which the traditions of the Foreign Office are not duly and sufficiently recognised. I can quite understand the right hon. Gentleman being in considerable difficulty in making a speech on this subject. A speech will have to be carried to a great length, and there will be some difficulty in discussing the various points with the Speaker in the Chair. I would suggest that, before the Foreign Office Estimates are discussed, some official Memorandum should be placed before the House of what view the Secretary of State takes generally of the recommendations of the Commission.

*(7.41.) **SIR J. POPE HENNESSY** (Kilkenny, N.): Before the right hon. Gentleman replies I wish to call his attention to an important recommendation of the Commission. It is a recommendation that ought not to escape the criticism of the House. The Report proposes to stereotype the system under which admission to the Foreign Office is gained by nomination, and not by open competition. The time has come to consider whether we are prepared to support that system. It is said you must have a certain number of clerks on whom you can implicitly rely. Clerkships in the Admiralty and the War Office are thrown open to competition, and it cannot be said that there are never any secrets to be kept in those Departments. Clerks are also appointed in the Colonial Office by open competition. They are entrusted with the most secret and confidential work, and they do it as faithfully as the Foreign Office clerks. What occurs with regard to many of the most confidential cypher telegrams? They pass through both Offices. Take the case of Newfoundland and France. I suppose that not a single telegram relating to the pending question of Newfoundland has not passed through the hands of clerks in the Colonial Office as well as in the Foreign Office. In 1859 a Committee was appointed on my Motion, which threw open the whole of the Civil Service to competition; but it made an exception with regard to the Foreign Office. Great changes have occurred since then. England has become more of a Colonial and less of a Continental Power. Why the old line should still be drawn and why one office in the State should be so exceptionally treated it is difficult to understand. With regard to the suggested consolidation of the Consular and Diplomatic Services recommended by my hon. Friend (Mr. Labouchere). It is much better to keep them separate. It was the practice in China and Japan to amalgamate them, but the plan did not work well, and Lord Salisbury wisely altered it. The recommendations contained in the Report of the Commissioners, with the exception of that by which it is sought to stereotype the present exclusive system of appointments to clerkships in

the Foreign Office, are admirable recommendations.

*(7.48.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The subject the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) has brought before the House is so important that I do not think any exception can be taken to his raising it. Yet I think that the hon. Gentleman, with his own experience at the Foreign Office, might have accepted for the present the assurances I gave him the other day that, as far as it could be done, the recommendations of the Commission were in course of execution. But the hon. Gentleman and others have asked for a statement on the matter, and I hope I shall be able to satisfy the House that the Government are taking due and proper steps to carry out those recommendations. I quite agree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton (Mr. H. H. Fowler) that the Report of such an important Commission is highly entitled to the consideration of the Government of the day, and that in particular the manner in which that Report deals with the Foreign Office demands the consideration of those who belonged to that Office. The Commissioners entered into the question with a care and consideration that certainly showed their full understanding of the very peculiar character of the business of that Office. I will, without unduly detaining the House, endeavour to show that the recommendations of the Commission are not being neglected in any way. The hon. Member for Aberdeen placed in the front the question of the amalgamation of the Services. That is being attended to. The examinations for the two branches are being assimilated, and after the next examination gentlemen who passed the last examination will be eligible for appointments both in the Foreign Office and in the Diplomatic Service. There is one matter in which the recommendation of the Commission has not been exactly followed. The Secretary of State thinks the limit of age proposed is somewhat too narrow. It is recommended that the limit should be between 20 and 24, but the Secretary of State has determined to appoint gentlemen between the ages of 19 and 25, and in special cases above that age. No one, I am sure, will dispute what the hon. Member for Aberdeen has said about the important character of the Diplomatic Service. Undoubtedly, unless our Diplomatic Officers are specially qualified, they will not be able to cope with the clever men of other nations with whom they are brought into contact, and the interests of this country will suffer. Instances have been brought before this House from which it is evident that our Representatives in past times have failed from geographical or other special knowledge to safeguard the interests of the country. Several hon. Members have referred to the salaries that are paid to the higher officers of the Diplomatic Service, and have expressed the opinion that in the superfluities of the Ambassadors and Ministers Plenipotentiary may be found the means of backing up the salaries of other ranks. I cannot think the idea put forward by the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) will recommend itself to the House. It is not in accordance with the practice of other nations that the Represensatives of the great Powers should not be able to live in a handsome manner, and so represent, if I may use the expression, the splendour of the country as well as its commercial greatness. It is not in accordance with the dignity of the country that our Representative should be meanly housed, and not be in a position to entertain hospitably. The French are much more liberal in the matter of Ambassadors' Residencies than this country. It may not be a popular sentiment, but I think that there would be a regrettable inferiority if the Representatives of this country were not able to maintain themselves in a position equal to that of the Representatives of other Powers. The question of whether Embassies should be provided, or whether Ambassadors should be left to take houses for themselves, is a moot question; in certain capitals it has been thought best to acquire residences. The same course has been followed in regard to some Foreign Representatives in London. With regard to the pay of Ambassadors, no doubt reductions may be made as vacancies occur. When Spain raised her Representative to the rank of Ambassador, and a vacancy occurred elsewhere, there was a transfer of some part of the salary, in order to

improve that of Her Majesty's Ambassador at Madrid, and hereafter it may be possible to effect savings in other directions; but it is manifestly impossible to reduce the standing salaries of Ambassadors during their tenure of office. One hon. Member has suggested that the Minister at Washington should be raised to the rank of Ambassador, having regard to the magnitude of the interests committed to his care. The House must remember that the rank given to our Representative depends largely on the wishes of the Government to whom he is accredited. If the United States desire to be represented by an Ambassador at this Court, nothing could give Her Majesty's Government greater pleasure than to reciprocate that desire; but no such desire has been expressed, and it would be premature for us to make the suggestion. I now come to matters of detail, with which I shall not occupy many minutes; but I am bound to show the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton that we have attended to the recommendations of the Commission. There was a recommendation in regard to details of work at the Foreign Office—the preparation of memoranda, the clearing off of arrears, the registering of all papers, and these things are in course of being carried out. In the copying room type-writing has been instituted. In reference to the question of Supplementary Clerks, I have to say that on the occurrence of vacancies the question of replacing them by Second Division clerks will be carefully considered. The recommendations with regard to foreign messengers and home messengers are being carried out. Then, as I have already stated, that most important matter of the amalgamation of the two branches of the Service is being attended to, as well as the reduction of higher salaries. As to chaplains, no doubt the Secretary of State will bear in mind that future chaplains should not be appointed under the old system. With regard to honorary attachés, in two or three instances already such appointments have been made. It is quite evident that the establishment of pensions for the two branches of the Service cannot be carried out without arrangements which will take some little time to complete with the Treasury. As to the Consular Service, the question of work in the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office has been attended to. The recommendation of the Commission was that Consuls should be required to work some period in the Commercial Department of the Foreign Office, and that is done when they can be spared from their posts, and they so spend two or three months on their first appointment There are difficulties in the way of the grading of Consuls and Vice Consuls, owing to the endless variety in the nature of the positions, and a system of grading would add greatly to the expense. A great deal of work is done by unpaid Consuls, who are content to discharge the duties in the place where they are appointed for the honour of the position, and the fees; and if these were dispensed with there would be a gain in uniformity, but there would be an addition to the cost of the Service. The hon. Member for North Kilkenny (Sir J. Hennessy) has touched upon a matter of very great importance and some delicacy. The hon. Gentleman has declared there is no necessity for keeping up the system by which there is only limited competition for the Diplomatic Service and Foreign Office. The hon. Member is well aware that every Secretary of State has held a different opinion from that which he has expressed. The matters which pass through the hands of every member of the Foreign Office are of the most delicate character, in which the interests of the country might be gravely jeopardised if the Secretary of State was unable to depend absolutely upon his subordinates. The hon. Member for Aberdeen has said that the deciphering of telegrams is mechanical work; but, as a matter of fact, it is most important and confidential work. Nobody can tell what a Despatch may contain until it is deciphered; it might be a matter which would cause grave jealousy and friction with a Foreign Power if it were made known. It is the duty of Her Majesty's Representatives abroad to convey to the Secretary of State matters that come under their knowledge, matters between Foreign Powers which in a variety of ways may seem to menace or have a bearing upon the interests of this country; and I think it is evident that these are matters that cannot be entrusted, even so far as deciphering telegrams are concerned, to any but public servants whose fidelity can be relied upon. It is a subject of pride to the Foreign Office that, with the exception of a case where a temporary writer surreptitiously gave the contents of an important Despatch to a newspaper, breach of confidence is absolutely unknown; and I think that if the system has worked so well for the benefit of the country, it is one which should not be disturbed. Of course, individuals should not be kept to mechanical work when they are fit for higher things; yet, nevertheless, the habits of routine and regularity gained in the lower ranks of the office cannot but be very useful when a man is raised to higher duties and appointed to a high post elsewhere. I hope that I have shown the House that in these matters we have not been unmindful of the recommendations of the Commission, but have treated them with the respect which they deserve; and I trust that when they have been carried out they will conduce to the efficiency and economy of the Service. With regard to the position of younger members of the Diplomatic Service abroad, I fear that it is impossible to make the Service self-supporting without an increase of expenditure which the country would not be willing to incur. It would be a miserable thing for a young man to go into the best society in a foreign capital where he should be, in order to be in touch with official life, possessed of means so small that he could not maintain his position or appear in the manner which he must desire. No doubt Ministers should save their subordinates from the necessity of expenditure as far as they can do so; but I feared that it must always be an expensive Service, and that the House would hardly grant the money which would be required to make it otherwise, and allow of the appointment of gentlemen in the first place not possessed of private means. (8.14.)

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL SHIPS.

*(8.45.) ADMIRAL FIELD (Sussex, Eastbourne): I am in sympathy with the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Mr. Bryce) who said he had waited nine years in the hope that he would be able to introduce this House to the mountains of Scotland. I have waited for three years to introduce the House to a most miserable system which has lasted for a long period, in regard to the management of the reformatory and industrial school ships of this country, to say nothing of the reformatory and industrial schools. I desire at the outset to set myself right with all members of industrial and reformatory school Committees by saying, that no one admires more than I do the disinterested zeal and the spirit of self-sacrifice they bring to bear on their work, and the great interest they have taken in trying to train up the poor little waifs and strays of our great cities. I do not desire either to say a harsh word about the Chief Inspector, Colonel Inglis, as I am satisfied that no officer could bring more zeal to bear upon the duty he has to perform, but I say that the system under which he is appointed is bad. I have placed upon the Paper the following Resolution, which, however, the Forms of the House will not permit me to move:—

> "That in any measure dealing with reformatory and industrial schools provision should be made for the interchange of boys between school ships and land schools, so that lads deemed unsuited physically for a sea life should be discharged to land schools and *vice versa*, and that all training ships under the Reformatory and Industrial Schools Act should be inspected by competent seamen Inspectors."

It would occur to every person, no doubt, as a matter of common-sense, that ships would be inspected by seamen Inspectors, but it is not, and it never has been, so. What are the qualifications of the existing Inspector? Colonel Inglis is an ex-officer of Dragoons. I should like to know what the Army would think if I myself, a nautical man, were appointed an Inspector of a troop of Horse Guards, although I can ride a horse and leap a fence, while I doubt whether Colonel Inglis could go aloft or know when a sail was properly reefed or furled. If the reformatory and industrial school ships were properly worked, they would furnish admirable sailors for our Mercantile Marine. It may not be known to many Members of the House what an enormous State expenditure goes on upon our reformatory and industrial school system. The hon. Member for Wigton said the other night in the Debate on Friendly Societies that State aid, if granted, would signify

State control. Well, Sir, we have an enormous amount of State aid in this matter of reformatory and industrial school ships, and we practically have the minimum of State control. I want more State control, so that the control may bear a better proportion to the aid. There are altogether in Great Britain 56 reformatories, including three ships, and the number of children detained there is 5,940. The Treasury grant amounts to £79,586; the County and Borough rates provide £23,999; there are subscriptions amounting to £4,092, and the parents are compelled to pay £5,037. The total expenditure is £118,724. 122 lads only are sent to sea out of 1,325 discharged during the year—that is to say, barely one-tenth of the whole go to sea. The industrial schools number 143, of which 10 are ships, 5 being tenders. The children under detention number 21,059. During the year 3,097 boys were discharged, and of these 440 go to sea. The Army takes 96 a year, and 160 are emigrated. The Treasury grant for industrial schools and ships amounts to £191,905; the County and Borough rates provide £40,157; the School Boards, £62,172; subscriptions, £35,299; and parents £15,521; the total expenditure being £361,817. Altogether nearly £500,000 of money yearly is spent on the rescue of children by means of our reformatory and industrial school system. It is time public opinion was brought to bear on that system. I have done my best to bring about an alteration by interviewing the officials of the Departments concerned, but can get no satisfaction from them. They all think that the system is perfect. Naval men do not agree with them. I have here some very valuable letters from naval men on the subject. Admiral Jones-Parry, who commanded the school-ship at Greenock for 17 years, writes—

> "These vessels are neither efficient nor manned for safety or utility, and the Home Office Inspection is a myth. They do not care either as to quantity or quality of the Staff."

He adds—

> "It really will be a public benefit and most useful to commanders of these ships if you will draw attention to this matter. They certainly cannot afford bands and tenders till they can get funds to obviate this very dangerous scandal. . . . . The Inspector is a soldier, an ex-major of Dragoon Guards, with two civilians as his assistants."

I have another letter from an officer commanding another ship, who has nearly broken his heart over this work. He says he hardly knows how he has done it so long. He does not care who inspects as long as it is a seaman, and he would rather be inspected by a chief boatswain than by a landsman. He has no fault to find with the present Inspector, but he wants to be inspected by a seaman. He goes on to say—

> "The spiritual and the nautical work are ignored to a great extent, and as long as so many per cent. pass the Fifth Standard everything else —discipline, &c.—may go to pot. All institutions that have to do with nautical training should have nautical Inspectors."

He says also—

> "I have to put up with so much that I sometimes blush to think that I should have allowed half, for the sake of our noble profession. But I am devoted to the work, and would bear a great deal."

In another letter he says—

> "The laws want amending and adapting to the times. The same code is enforced for children of 11 and 12 on shore as is employed on ships for young men of 18 and 19."

I am one of those who do not desire the Admiralty to have a hold upon these ships, because I think if they were properly worked, they are an admirable nursery for supplying the waste of life in the Mercantile Marine. I find in a very admirable pamphlet by Rear-Admiral Parry, for many years in command of one of the training ships, the writer says—

> "I find that during the six years 1874-79 the five industrial training ships discharged 2,864 boys, of whom 1,760 only went to sea."

Then he goes on to say—

> "In 1886 the discharges were 439 to sea, and to shore 362, or out of 800 a little more than half went to sea. The cost of each boy discharged from the *Clio*, he shows, was £132 10s.; for the *Mount Edgcumbe*, £171; for the *Wellesley*, £129 15s.; the *Shaftesbury*, £115; the *Formidable*, £122 15s.; the *Southampton*, £149 15s.; the *Cumberland*, £109 10s.; and the *Mars* (tender), £113—or an average of £122 per boy."

I do not reckon what is expended on boys discharged to shore, because I hold that these ship schools are intended to train boys for the mercantile marine, to supply the waste of life, for it is sad to contemplate that from 4,000 to 5,000 persons are drowned every year. The system I desire to see inaugurated is shortly this:—First, the Magistrate should not send to these ship schools boys under 12 years of age. If under that age, they should be committed to the land schools; and any sailor who knows anything about the training of boys for sea will at once confirm me in that view. Many of the lads sent to the ships are starvelings, with no physique fitting for the sea. It is useless to send many of them, and to forward them to the ship schools is like sending them to their graves. Only those boys who are qualified for the sea should be sent for training. What I want from the Department is a promise that this matter will be really considered, with a view to seeing whether some remedy can be applied. A circular might be sent to the Magistrates suggesting that they should not commit boys to ship schools under the age of 12 years. Under that age it is a waste of time and money to train them. And if a circular were sent to the Committees of the land schools in the vicinity of the ship schools, I am certain they would encourage the transfer to the ship schools of boys fitted for the sea. There are boys of 15, 16, or 17 years shipped now as ordinary seamen who ought not to be permitted to assume that position. We had a case brought under the notice of the President of the Board of Trade the other day by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Birmingham, of the illegal shipment of persons called able seamen at Cardiff. It is a gross scandal, and I hope the officers who were guilty will be prosecuted for their pains. If a circular were issued—I do not think legislation is required—the system I advocate would be an accomplished fact in a month. We ought to bear in mind that whatever tends to improve the Mercantile Marine must improve the Navy, as it is on the Mercantile Marine in time of war, that we must rely for the supply of the Navy with men. I now represent the unanimous opinion of all the officers who command these training ships. In another part of his pamphlet, Rear-Admiral Parry says, that if school ships are to remain as at present, there must be Naval Inspectors. That is what I have long advocated, and you could have it without extra charge. You are spending enough money now, but you are getting no result compared with your enormous expenditure. It is anomalous that these ship schools—13 in number, 10 industrial and three reformatory schools, excluding one in Ireland which is worst of all, and they are all inspected by a soldier, while there are plenty of sailors available who would do the work for a trifle, aye, for nothing, if you cannot afford to pay. But if the Home Office plead expense, I would point out that they have already an officer who is admirably qualified for the work, and was for some years in command of a training ship. Afterwards he became Post Captain, and took up the work of reformation among boys commanding the reformatory ship at Liverpool for five years. You could not have a better man than Admiral Fenwick. Perhaps you will say that he cannot be spared. Try, you will not find it difficult. I make every apology for the Home Office in this matter, because it is overwhelmed with work. Still, that is not an argument why this absurd system should not be stamped under foot. I believe the Home Office would be perfectly willing to meet my views if they could bring their powerful minds to bear on the subject; but they are so immersed in work that they do not read the Reports of their own Inspectors, otherwise the present state of things would not be allowed to continue. For instance, there is the *Havannah*, at Cardiff, which ought to be immediately got rid of. Cardiff is a large port, and ought to have a big ship commanded by a naval officer and 300 boys on board, whereas she has only 92. The Inspector, in his Report for the year 1887, says, in regard to the *Havannah*, industrial school ship—

> "The situation of the ship is undesirable and unwholesome, being damp and swampy. The medical officer has given the most unfavourable Report of its sanitary surroundings. As to industrial training the boys, it is stated, make most of their own clothing under the matron, and are taught clothes making."

But these schools are established not to teach the boys to make clothes, but to make them sailors. Then it is said that they go out for housework in the neighbourhood and as errand boys; but they ought not to be employed in such work; they ought to be trained as sailors. In this year's Report it is said that there is a wholesale deposit of town refuse close to the vessel, and that neither site nor so-called training-ship is suitable for the work carried on. The Report further says—

> "The industrial training amounts to very little, there is no progress from year to year."

Then I say shut it up.

"Much more could be done," the Report goes on, "if proper use were made of the opportunity."

Why is not proper use made of the opportunity? The number of boys in the vessel is, as I have stated, 92; the total cost is £1,447, or at the miserably low sum of £15 4s. per head. The thing is a fraud and a scandal, a deceit and a snare. An officer of Dragoons went round and inspected the ship, but he does not know whether there was a sufficient staff on board or not. The Education Department have no difficulty in getting their system carried out; the Home Office would have none if they appointed a naval officer to inspect the ships. If nothing is done by the Home Office in consequence of my criticism I shall take a Division upon the Vote when it comes on, and I shall spare no trouble to expose this fraud all over the country. The friend who has given me information on the subject has been 17 years in command of vessels, and he says that the second officer is a schoolmaster, and that he ought to be a warrant officer or a retired officer. There was one ship, the *Cornwall*, at Purfleet, which has a lieutenant, a retired officer acting as second in command, and it is doing well. Only the year before last the *Cumberland* was burned down to the water's edge, to the great danger of life, having been set on fire by some of the boys. They confessed their guilt, and they would have been punished if a naval officer had been allowed a free hand. But they were handed over to a Civil Court, and the Sheriff summed up against them, but a Scotch jury brought in a verdict of "Not proven," and although I appealed to the Lord Advocate that the boys should not be discharged, but should be sent to some shore school, and at his request repeated that appeal to the Home Secretary, it was found that no Committee on a land school would receive the boys, and ultimately they were allowed to go scot free. Then there was the case of the *Akbar*, which occurred at Liverpool two years ago; a mutiny arose among the boys on board that ship. The learned Judge, according to the Report, said the boys got the upper hand for a time, that they committed robbery and went ashore, but he declined to punish them because the system on the *Akbar* was defective, the Staff of officers was defective and inadequate, and the management characterised by a want of firmness and determination which, if it had been exhibited at the right time, would easily have quelled the disturbance. That is my point. If this ship had been adequately inspected this scandal would have been avoided. I dare say that scarcely a Member of this House has taken the trouble to read this Report, or no one would attempt to justify the present system. I think I have suggested a proper remedy. We want that the training ships shall be considered as recruiting establishments for the Mercantile Marine. They should all be commanded by naval officers, as I believe they are with the one wretched exception of the *Havannah* at Cardiff; Naval Inspectors should be appointed; certain land schools should be affiliated to the ship schools; and representations should be made to the Magistrates to stop boys under 12 years of age being committed to the ship schools. If these reforms are effected I shall probably not have occasion to call the attention of the House to the subject again.

*(9.33.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. STUART WORTLEY, Sheffield, Hallam): I think everyone sympathises with my hon. and gallant Friend in his trouble in getting an opportunity of discussing this question, and also with his desire to realise to the full the ideal possibilities of these reformatory and industrial ship schools in the way of recruiting the Navy and the Mercantile Marine. But in considering this question the House must remember that this class of schools is entirely founded and managed by private philanthropic enterprise and not conducted for the purpose of profit. Their only connection with the Home Secretary is that the right hon. Gentleman has to see to the enforcement of the conditions on which a certain rate of grant in aid is given by the overnment. The actual net result of the training given in these ships has, undoubtedly, been disappointing. There are 11 of these ship schools in England and Scotland, three of them being reformatories, and eight of them being industrial ships. Among these 11 the *Havannah* does not appear, as she is not regarded as a school ship. In the eye of the law she is an industrial school, registered under the Act of 1866

It is true that of the children who passed through reformatory school ships in the last three years not more than 59 per cent. went to sea; and of those who passed through the industrial school ships not more than 56 per cent. went to sea. But then the children are sent to the ships by Magistrates, over whose decisions the Home Secretary has very little control except by discharging a child out and out. Supposing the Home Secretary wishes to have a child transferred from a land school to a ship school, he can not effect the transfer by the mere exercise of his executive power. The managers of the ship school must declare themselves willing to receive the boy; the managers of the land school must declare themselves willing to part with the boy; and the wishes of the parents must be consulted in cases where the parents are of good character. Therefore, we are unable to effect the transfer so readily as my hon. Friend wishes. The reason is not far to seek. Obviously, the boys best fitted for a school ship are robust boys; and as boys are received into industrial schools with a view to their labour in the later years of their training becoming profitable, and with a view to their later careers reflecting credit on the schools, it is clear that no land school would be willing to part with its more robust boys in exchange for the weaklings. The managers of reformatory and industrial schools are particularly averse—for which they cannot be blamed—to allowing children to be moved about from one school to another in the earlier stages of their detention. My hon. and gallant Friend has hinted at one measure which might be taken, and which is taken, as a matter of practice in a large number of the 11 ships now existing. This measure is that committals to the ships shall not take place before the age of 12 years. I will undertake to inquire if this rule cannot be laid down, and I do not think that legislation will be necessary to give it effect. I will also gladly undertake that the Inspectors shall be instructed to take every possible opportunity of promoting the transfer of fit boys from the land schools to the ship schools. But many persons' consent is required for these transfers, and if the boy himself is unwilling it is generally necessary to consult the parents of the boy if they are living and respectable. It is impossible for the Government to seek to bring about a better proportion between expenditure and results by lowering the grant as a measure of economy, because to do so would simply kill the schools altogether.

*ADMIRAL FIELD: I did not advocate the reduction of the grant for one moment. I only want to secure a supply of boys for our ships.

*MR. STUART WORTLEY: The only alternative is to proceed to a system of compulsory transfers, to which course there are obvious difficulties. With regard to the small proportion of boys taken into the Navy from these school ships, I may point out that the Admiralty refuse to take the boys from the reformatory ships, because they have been convicted of some actual offence. That, no doubt, is a proper decision, for they ought not to allow boys of this class to associate with other boys. As regards industrial school boys, the Admiralty requires them to satisfy high physical standards; but I am bound to admit, as regards the industrial school boys, that the physical standard of many of them is not so high as might be desired, and I agree with my hon. and gallant Friend in wishing that the total number of boys who enter the Navy and the Mercantile Marine, from the whole of the schools referred to, were greater than at present, namely, 56 per cent. But there are several difficulties in this, not the least of which is often the wish of the parents at the close of the period of the boy's detention, which may occur as early as 14 years of age, and cannot go beyond 16. It is impossible to deny to respectable parents who still have the right to exercise parental control, a voice in the ultimate disposal of their children's future, and in many such cases their wish is that their children shall not go to sea. It is to be borne in mind, too, that the boys are just at the age, having received a number of years' training and education, to be of use and profit to their parents at home. I admit that the result of the naval training in such schools is not so satisfactory or ample as my hon. and gallant Friend desires. As to the inspection and management of the ship schools, it should be remembered that these particular schools contained only 3,000 children out of about 23,000 in all the industrial and reformatory schools and for that small proportion it can hardly be expected that there should be a separate Inspector appointed solely for the school ships; but I am bound to say that I think there is great justice in the remark of my hon. and gallant Friend that in appointing Inspectors in future special regard should be had to the fact that the training in these ships is to a very great extent to fit boys for the Navy and the Mercantile Marine. It ought, however, to be borne in mind, at the same time, that every one of these ships is under the command of a retired naval officer, and also that each of the ships being situated in some port of importance, it follows that the committee who manage them is composed mainly of persons who are acquainted with the needs of the Mercantile Marine. I submit, too, that if a naval man were appointed as Inspector, it would be necessary to appoint an officer of high rank to supervise the work of the commanding officers of the school ships, and I doubt even then whether we should be able to get very much better securities than we have already that these establishments shall satisfy the requirements naturally expected by those who wish to see a good result from them in the way of training boys for the Navy or Mercantile Service. It must be remembered, moreover, that training for the Marine Service is not the only object of the schools. Carpentering, tailoring, shoemaking, and other trades are taught in them, and if my hon. and gallant Friend's contention were to be fully carried out, it would become necessary to have a distinct Inspector for each of all those occupations.

*Admiral FIELD: I did not suggest that another naval man should be appointed. I asked that the Home Office should use one of their own officers —Admiral Fenwick.

*Mr. STUART WORTLEY: And that Admiral is now doing admirable work as an Inspector of Prisons, and it would be very hard to take him away from that duty. However, I have made certain promises to my hon. and gallant Friend, beyond which I cannot go, and I hope he will be satisfied with them, and that in asking us to improve these school-ships, as we shall always seek to do, he will not ask that we should lay them under conditions which might improve them off the face of the earth.

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS OF SCOTLAND.

(9.54.) Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I desire to call the attention of the House to the Report of the West Highland Commissioners, although I shall not be in order in moving as I had intended—

> "That, in the opinion of this House, the Government ought to proceed without delay to carry out the schemes recommended for the development of the material resources of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland."

No apology is required for bringing this matter forward. The Report of the Commissioners was issued in July last, and the Government were asked what they were prepared to do to carry out the recommendations it contained. The reply given was to the effect that the subject would be considered by the Government, and that they hoped to be able to announce their policy on the re-assembling of Parliament for the Autumn Session. When Parliament re-assembled, however, the Government stated that the matter had been under their consideration, and that they were then only waiting for the arrival of Lord Lothian, who was detained in Scotland through illness, to announce what they intended to do. Two months have elapsed since then; but the Government have not yet made any declaration, and I think it is time they should do so. I approach the subject in no censorious spirit so far as the present Government are concerned, for I admit that they have shown some desire to deal with the subject. Lord Lothian has personally visited the localities, and in that respect he was, I think, the pioneer of the Chief Secretary for Ireland in respect to his action on Irish distress. The condition of the Highlands and Islands of Scotland has long been the subject of Commissions; but no practical good having yet followed from them, it is not surprising that the inhabitants have lost confidence in them, and are sceptical as to any good results. The fact has been fully admitted on all hands that extreme poverty prevails in those parts of the country that came within the sphere of the Commissioners' Report; indeed, I venture to say that the distress there is not less than that in those districts in Ireland for the relief of which so much money has lately been raised. Since 1889 as much as £1,500,000 has been voted for the purpose of constructing light railways, drainage works, and other improvements in the distressed parts of Ireland, and surely it is not unfair to expect, if the need exists, and it does exist, that Scotland shall be treated in an equally liberal manner. I claim from this Unionist Government that the United Kingdom shall be treated as one indivisible whole, and that in whatever part of it great distress exists, whether in England, Ireland, or Scotland, it shall be relieved. Each part of the United Kingdom ought in this respect to be treated by the Imperial Government equally with the others. I must give the present Government credit for having voted more than their predecessors for the relief of distress in the Highlands. The Local Government (Scotland) Act set aside £10,000 for the benefit of the crofting counties, where the distress was more clamant, but that £10,000 came out of the pockets of the people of Scotland as a whole. We, therefore, have this result: that we have exceptional distress in the Highlands, for which Scotland, as a portion of the United Kingdom, is called upon to pay, yet the Lowlands of Scotland have nothing to do with that distress; and, on the other hand, Scotland, as a part of the United Kingdom, is called upon to bear its share of the relief of distress in Ireland. What I contend is, that if we have exceptional distress in any portion of Scotland it ought to be treated in the same way as exceptional distress in any portion of Ireland or England. The £10,000, which has really been expended locally, is being spent in discharge of what is properly an Imperial obligation resting upon the Government. The next point is, what is the amount we have to claim on behalf of the Highlands to develop the material resources of Scotland in the same way as the material resources of Ireland are being developed? The sum needed would represent a capital of £1,000,000 sterling, and that, at 2¾ per cent., would be about £27,500, or, say, in round figures, £30,000. If £30,000 a year were devoted to grapple with a distress which is an Imperial distress, the amount would not be excessive for us to ask the Imperial Government to bear. I find that the recommendations of the Commissioners involve an outlay of £280,000, in addition to £30,000 for beacons, lighthouses, &c.

(10.2.) Notice taken, that 40 Members were not present; House counted, and 40 Members being found present,

Mr. Caldwell: The count that has just taken place has had this good effect: that it has brought in the First Lord of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, both of whom have undertaken to consider the question of the grants to the Highlands. I hope they will take the opportunity of declaring the policy of the Government. Some remarks were made on the Report of the Commission by the late Lord Advocate, which would probably tend to cast a reflection on the men of the West Coast. It was pointed out that men on the East Coast can come round to the West and fish, while the boats of the West Coast fishermen are lying on the shore. But in the case of the East Coast fishermen, the boats are necessarily large. The men live in localities intersected by railways, and in which there is a large population, and the result is that the East Coast fisherman is a man of more wealth, and necessarily has a larger boat, which can come round to the West Coast. The West Coast fishermen are very poor, and it is impossible for them to own large boats. There is also a lack of harbours such as exist on the East Coast, and what is wanted is better harbour facilities and a ready communication with the markets of the South. Three lines of railway are recommended by the Commissioners. The first is a line to Mallaig, and the Commissioners recommend that a sum of 2½ per cent. should be guaranteed for four years on an estimated cost of £285,000. It is impossible that any Railway Company would construct a railway on any such terms. I think in such a case, considering what is being done in the congested districts of Ireland, the Government should bear a third of the cost. The Commissioners also recommend the construction of a harbour at Mallaig at a cost of £15,000. The second line proposed is to Kyleakin. If a line were made to Mallaig we would have the North British competing with the Highland Railway, who would be compelled to bring their line from Strome Ferry to Kyleakin, and also to Ullapool, if they wished to secure any of the Lewis or Skye traffic. The proposals of the Commissioners for the improvement of harbour accommodation. in the Lewis amount to about £53,000

I do not suppose the Government will dispute the necessity of spending £11,000 to improve the harbour of Ness, or of the £12,000 on Carloway. So far as the proposed expenditure of £20,000 on piers and coal slips is concerned, I am not at one with the Commissioners, as I think they ought to encourage the use of large rather than small boats. But to be of any real use to the fishermen, the harbours of Ness and Carloway must be connected with Stornoway by means of light railways, so that the fish can be sent to the southern markets in a fresh condition. The Commissioners recommend as an experiment that a steamer should go round, but a steamer would occupy a day or two to going round, with the result that much of the fish would lose the market. The only reason why I can suppose the Commissioners recommended a steamer is that they travelled in the summer in one of Her Majesty's yachts, and they found it in fine weather very agreeable. But in winter it is quite impossible for a steamer to go round, and it would be quite impossible to keep up the connection with different points of the coast, or serve the many parts whence produce should be sent to market. With a railway of some 23 miles a great catch of fish at any point could be run into Stornoway in about an hour, besides which the line would convey farm produce, butter, eggs, and other things requiring quick transit to market. The expense of maintaining the line would not be greater than that of keeping up a steamer. The Government have said that in the case of Lewis they are willing to give £15,000 for the purpose of improving roads, and I suppose the idea is that these might in some future time be used for a tramway. The District Councils will have nothing to do with this proposal, and rightly so. Anyone who knows the district will understand that this expenditure is useless. The road is not fenced now. Is it right it should be? In the first place, the expense of it would be comparatively enormous, and besides which cattle passing along the road browse on either side, resting as they go. The District Councils say they are willing to maintain a railway if it is made, and naturally they will do this, because a railway would enhance the value of the property, and the inhabitants could afford to pay the tax that might be necessary to meet expenses after the original outlay has been met by the State. In Lewis there are a great many crofters who are practically owners of their holdings, and quite apart from the fishing industry a light railway would make those crofts more valuable. This is what the people want, but the Government objection is that it will involve a large expenditure. Now, in the case of Lewis, a railway connecting certain points with Stornoway would cost about £3,000 a mile, and the capital sum required for, say, 46 miles would be about £138,000, and in Skye the distance would be about 45 miles, amounting to £135,000, so that the total cost would be £273,000, or £7,000 a year, as against the £7,000 or £10,000 which the recommendation of the Commissioners for a steamer would cost. Let the House bear in mind an outlay of this kind is not in the nature of a charitable grant. The fishermen have declared they would be quite willing to pay for the use of harbours for their boats, just as fishermen on the east coast of Scotland do; but it is obvious that with the number of boats they have a reasonable tax would not be sufficient to pay the cost of harbours. Though the Government would be spending a large sum of money in such works, it could not be said that individuals received any charitable assistance therefrom. They would pay for the use, just as the east coast fishermen pay. In the same way, in the Postal Service a letter is carried for 1d., but it may cost the Post Office 6d. to carry it. There is a loss to the Exchequer, but there is no charity towards the individual whose correspondence is carried; he simply enjoys the advantage of a system in common with the rest of the country. So will the people pay for the use of harbours and light railways as they do in other parts of Scotland. What the Government would do in this direction would be for the benefit of the district and the development of its resources for future generations. I am entitled to say that the West of Scotland requires that speedy access to markets which is possessed by the East at the present time. This involves the question on the mainland of subsidising one or more railways, making harbours which would be accessible to large boats, and connecting these with the capital of the islands where mail steamers would call. The distress in the West of Scotland is nothing more or less than the similar distress in the West of Ireland, due to the mountainous nature of the country, the sparse population, and the want of communication; and I contend that I am entitled to call upon a Unionist Government to treat the distress in Scotland in the same way as they have treated that in Ireland. Scotland pays £10,000 out of the Probate Duty towards what is really an Imperial matter, and it is not unreasonable that they should ask the Government to devote £30,000 a year towards the remedying of the present state of things and meeting an obligation on the Imperial Exchequer.

(10.40.) DR. McDONALD (Ross and Cromarty): In seconding the proposals of my hon. Friend it is not necessary that I should again go over the ground he has traversed to such advantage. The hon. Member, in the earlier part of his speech alluded to the number of Commissions which have sat upon questions relating to the Highlands. We have had a great many Commissions which have dealt with the Highlands, some beneficial and some useless; but I think that nothing has approached the slovenly way in which this Commission did its work. The Commissioners scuttled from place to place; they went to Ullapool; they saw nobody, they went away, and express an opinion as to what should be done, and so on in other districts. I should go beyond the terms of the Motion were I to say much upon this, but I may say that great dissatisfaction exists in the Highlands as to the way in which the Commissioners performed their duties. There are some wise recommendations in the Report, but there are some that are very unwise. As to this recommendation of a steamer for the West Coast of Lewis, everybody knows, who has any knowledge of the Island, that it is stupid to talk about such a thing. I marvel that, even with their summer experience, they could recommend such a thing. It has on all sides been repudiated as ridiculous in the extreme. There are but three or four months in the year that a steamer could go there; it is one of the wildest places on the whole coast of Scotland. This one recommendation shows that the Commission did not go very fully into matters they were appointed to look into in the Islands. I quite agree with the remarks of my hon. Friend as to the necessity of doing something for the Western Islands. I do not say the need is greater this year, for want is chronic there. I do not think we are asking the Government to do very much if we ask them to consider these half-hearted recommendations of the Commission. Indeed, it is difficult to know when the Commissioners are in earnest, their recommendations are so qualified with "ifs" and "buts." But the Government have certainly been chary in accepting the recommendations, it is difficult to know what they intend to do; they have not shown their hand. We know that £10,000 a year is given to the Highlands; but who gets the benefit of it? It goes in support of the rates, that is, half to the landlords. Quite two-thirds goes to large farmers and owners, and about a-tenth goes to the crofter, and these have very little to be thankful for with £1,000 spread over the whole number. My hon. Friend talks of getting £30,000 from the Government and I shall be delighted if he succeeds. We see in the public prints that the Government are expected to do so much. Is it going to be an annual sum? If we are going to get it only while they are in office it may not be for a long series of years. My hon. Friend has spoken of the means of land transit in Lewis, and he has put the position wisely and lucidly. There is no use in landing the fish unless there is the means of conveying the fish away, and the only quick means of transit is by light railways. With regard to piers and harbours, I have over and over again been told by the people that they would be only too pleased to pay dues in any reasonable manner. They pointed out that really there would be little or no extra expense in this. Possibly it would be cheaper to pay harbour dues than to suffer the loss of ropes and chains, which on the coast of Lewis is considerable in the course of the year. I hope we shall have some information to-night as to what is going to be done. The people are anxiously looking forward to the Government proposals.

(10.49.) MR. A. SUTHERLAND (Sutherland): I think the hon. Member for St. Rollox Division is justified in his Motion, and I hope it may be successful in inducing the Government to deal with this matter in a liberal manner. We have had a statement from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that they are going to deal with it this Session, carrying out some of the recommendations of the Commission. For my own part I should have been satisfied to have accepted the statement of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the hon. Member has shown a knowledge of the district, especially of Lewis, which is entitled to respect, and it may be that he has claims upon the Government that we cannot urge. He has talked of the duty of a Unionist Government, and, of course, it is not for me to say what the duty of the Party particularly is; but if they acknowledge the particular duty of giving heed to recommendations when backed by a supporter of their policy, then we are perfectly willing to accept his assistance. I can well understand the Government are entitled to take precautions that the money is really spent to carry out the objects desired. The hon. Member has said a great deal about piers and harbours, but I did not quite gather his views as to guarantees, whether they should be given locally as to construction and maintenance. This is an important matter, and I think the Lord Advocate will give me credit for saying that when the Local Government Bill was passed I foresaw the whole of this matter, and suggested that it would be a good thing if County Councils were given power to construct and maintain piers and harbours in Scotland. He did not see his way to accept the suggestion, but I think, in view of the grants that are going to be given, it would be a good thing if Representative Bodies like County Councils had the power of getting Provisional Orders passed by the aid of the Board of Trade, to construct and maintain these harbours. As to railways, I will not go over what has already been said, but I trust the Government will, in dealing with this branch of the subject, have regard to meeting the requirements of the West Coast. The people are scattered at irregular intervals along the western coast. It is not necessary to enter into the causes of this distribution; there they are, and I am content to accept the position, and I hope I may not be considered selfish if I press the claims of Sutherland in this respect. I do not quite know how much is comprised in the words of the Resolution—"the development of the material resources of the Highlands"—and whether the land, which is a material resource, is excluded. I do not want to embarrass the Government. I have my desire to be reasonable, and if they show us plans for developing the other material resources of the Highlands and Islands, I am willing to accept anything they may give *pro tanto*, but expecting more. The question has been gone into so fully that I should not be justified in detaining the House further, only I would impress upon the Government that they should not consider this question in a niggardly way. I know perfectly well the considerations that weigh with the Government in matters of this kind. I see the difficulty of dealing out money without a sufficient local guarantee that the money shall be spent in the best manner possible. I do not take the view that there is exceptional distress to be met in the Highlands. I do not put the claim on that ground. It is an attempt on the part of the Government to do a duty which should have been done years ago. It is a complement of the policy we have over and over again heard stated in the House and which was meant to be carried out in 1880. This is not to be considered in the sense of an eleemosynary grant. I hope the Government will try and be as liberal as possible in carrying out the recommendations of the Commission.

*(10.58.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I have listened with a great deal of attention to the remarks which have been made by various hon. Members as to the state of Lewis and and the other Islands on the West Coast of Scotland. The Government have taken steps to inform themselves as to the condition of that part of Her Majesty's Dominions. It is not now proposed that they should do anything on the ground of distress, but that, as there is a portion of the country which remains undeveloped, assistance may be given to enable the inhabitants to maintain themselves in a condition of perfect independence. It was with that purpose the Government thought it right to appoint a Commission. The labours of the Commission have been spoken of in a very disparaging manner, but I think if hon. Members will look at the result, it will be found that the Commissioners devoted a large amount of time to their duty, and brought a great deal of

knowledge to bear upon the subject. The hon. Gentleman asks us to state what the plans of the Government are. I think he will see that it would be exceedingly improper for us to do so. We are not now stating what we propose to do—as we shall state when we have very carefully considered the matter. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, my noble Friend the Secretary for Scotland, and my right hon. Friend the Secretary to the Treasury have been engaged for many weeks carefully considering what measure will best promote the interests we all have at heart. The Government desire not so much to relieve exceptional distress, but, if they can, to raise the condition of that part of the country to a higher level than it has attained in the past. Undoubtedly means of communication are necessary, and so is the improvement of harbours, lights, piers, and landing-stages. Those are questions which have received the careful consideration of the Government; but, as hon. Members must be aware, they are not matters to be arranged offhand, or by a simple decision on the part of the Government that it is desirable such works should be undertaken. Communications have to be made with the Local Authorities and with all persons who are locally interested, and I may say that I, for one, am exceedingly loth to undertake on the part of the Government the whole cost of the work to be done. I do not lay it down as an absolute rule, but I think that, if possible, it is most desirable that the locality itself should undertake to bear a portion of the expense, even if it is only a small portion of the work which is intended to be permanently beneficial to the district. I only indicate in a general way the views of the Government, and I say this much in order to show hon. Gentlemen that the matter has engaged our attention most seriously, and that, if we have made no proposal to Parliament as yet, time has not been lost. When the Government come to the House and ask for a Vote, I think that we shall be able to justify the course we have taken. I deprecate the view that any portion of the community should rely on the Imperial Parliament for everything that is necessary to it. I am aware, from my own personal knowledge and observation, that many parts of the West of

Scotland, and, certainly, many parts of the Highlands and the coasts, are in a very bad condition indeed; that the means of the population are very small; and that we should, therefore, be justified in going further in affording assistance than we should in many parts of Her Majesty's Dominions. But, still, the principle is the same, and we have a right to expect the landowners and all interested in the districts to afford assistance and to help in carrying out the improvements we desire to effect. We know that the people are unable to help in carrying out the improvements; but their interest is so great that we think they will be able to find the means necessary to maintain the improvements when they are effected. Reference has been made to railways. They are no doubt valuable as means of communication, but care must be taken to see that the traffic which is likely to arise will be sufficient to maintain the lines, and to justify the Government in holding the belief that a railway will contribute to the resources of the country. It cannot be said that in some parts of Scotland this will be the case. It is only natural that a Member representing a county in Scotland should desire to see a railway not only pass through his county, but through a considerable portion of it. We are conscious of the condition of these districts, but we are also conscious of the duty that belongs to us of endeavouring as far as we possibly can to raise districts which have difficulties to contend with, from a position of distress to one in which they will be able to stand, and take their part in the struggle for life which every inhabitant of the British Empire desires to maintain.

COMMERCIAL TREATIES.

*(11.8.) **Mr. HOWARD VINCENT** (Sheffield, Central): I rise to call attention to certain Commercial Treaties in force between Her Majesty and Foreign Nations, and to the Report of the Trade and Treaties Committee of the Board of Trade. I wish to call particular attention to the Treaty concluded with Belgium on July 23rd, 1862, and to the Treaty with the Zollverein on May 30th, 1865. The Treaty with Belgium of 1862 contains this stipulation—

> "Article VII. Articles the produce or manufacture of Belgium shall not be subject

> in the British Colonies to other or higher duties than those which are or may be imposed upon similar articles of British origin."

The Treaty with the Zollverein of 1865 contains a clause to a similar effect though not quite in the same words, and the Memorandum which was furnished in the Parliamentary Paper presented in 1888 contained the following:—

> "While these two Treaties remain in force the express stipulations above quoted are extended to all countries whose Commercial Treaties with Great Britain contain a most-favoured-nation clause, and apply to British Colonies."

I have gone through these Treaties carefully with the object of seeing whether they afford British goods any special favour, and I cannot find that they afford any special privileges whatever which are not shared by other Most Favoured Nations. So long as these Treaties remain in force it is quite impossible for this country to conclude any special commercial arrangements with Canada, Australia, or, in fact, with any of the colonies. These Treaties do not end, as many people suppose, in 1892, but remain in force until terminated by a year's notice. The attention of Her Majesty's Government has on frequent occasions been directed to the crippling power of these Treaties in any special commercial arrangement which the Mother Country might desire to enter into with the colonies or which the colonies might desire to enter into with each other. I have here an official copy of a Debate which took place in the House of Commons of Ottawa on the 21st April, 1890, and I find that Sir Alexander Galt, the High Commissioner for Canada, in London in 1882, called the attention of Her Majesty's Government to these Treaties, and was informed that neither the Belgian Government nor the German Government could permit the cancelling of the prohibitive clause. Lord Kimberley, at that time Colonial Secretary, wrote also to the Governor of Jamaica, saying that Her Majesty's Government could not sanction any arrangement that would involve the creation of Differential Duties in favour of Canada. This pronouncement was made in connection with negotiations which had been entered into with a view to the framing of a Special Convention between Canada and Jamaica. I do not bring the question before the House as one between Fair Trade and Free Trade, or as a question demanding a change in the fiscal system of the country; but because these Treaties are a distinct restraint on trade within the British Empire. The Government seem now to have departed from the view expressed by Lord Kimberley, and to acknowledge the right of the colonies to conclude special Differential Treaties with each other. The Mother Country is alone shut out, and this is an unfortunate and almost a humiliating position for the centre of a great Empire to occupy. The colonies themselves feel it to be so, and there can be no stronger evidence of the desire prevailing in Canada and the Australian Colonies for closer commercial relations with Great Britain than the fact that the Agents General of the self-governing colonies were, in January, instructed to represent unanimously to the Trade and Treaties Committee of the Board of Trade the pernicious effect of these two Treaties, and to urge their renunciation. On the same day this very view was represented to the Committee by a deputation of whom I was one. It was composed of all Parties, including, amongst others, the hon. Member for Battersea and the hon. Member for St. Pancras, and it was accompanied by General Laurie, who in 1890 brought the matter before the Canadian Legislature. It is an open secret that the matter was debated in the Committee, and, as the President of the Board of Trade stated, he received a Report from the Committee. We have already received the First Report of the Trade and Treaties Committee, and many Members of the House are anxiously awaiting the publication of the Second Report. There may be important reasons why this Report should not be issued at present, but I do earnestly hope, in spite of what the right hon. Baronet the President of the Board of Trade stated this afternoon, that before long he will see his way to the publication of the Second Report. Even if the Report of the Committee does not recommend the immediate renunciation of the two Treaties with Belgium and the Zollverein and the freeing of the hands of the British Empire, I do hope that Her Majesty's Government, especially having in mind what fell from the right hon. Gentleman the

Leader of the House a few minutes ago, that they regard themselves as the guardians of the integrity of the Empire, will of their own initiative, whatever the Report says on the subject, strike this clause out of the two Treaties. I beg, in their connection, to call the attention of the House to the First Report of the Trade and Treaties Committee. It says in paragraph 8—

> "Not only have these minimum duties been raised generally to the level of the General Tariff of 1881, *i.e.*, about 24 per cent. above the present Conventional Tariff, but more complicated classifications have been introduced, which will cause disputes, and, consequently, delay and friction, between the French Custom House officials and the importers. In many particular instances, the duties are raised much more than the above-mentioned 24 per cent., the extra rates for bleaching, dyeing, printing, embroidering, and generally for all processes which involve more labour as distinguished from mere material, being considerably increased."

The Report goes on to say—

> "The effects would, no doubt, be injurious not only to British trade with France, but to our trade with the Continent generally, although the chief injury, we may assume, will be to the French people themselves. The extent of the primary losses to be inflicted on our own trade, apart from the more general mischiefs referred to in the previous paragraph, is naturally the subject of very serious complaint from the special interests concerned. In various trades, especially in the woollen, worsted, and other textile trades, the representations made to us are that the proposed tariff will, in effect, prohibit the export of certain articles of manufacture from this country to France, and greatly restrict the export of many others. A measure which can be described as having such effects is, as already indicated, an act of commercial hostility to the country affected; and this attitude towards English trade is, indeed, hardly disguised in discussions of the subject in France."

I certainly do not see why the Trade and Treaties Committee should have gone out of their way to call attention to the possible effect of any legislation on the French people. The French people are quite capable of taking care of themselves. This is, however, an important expression of opinion on the part of the Trade and Treaties Committee which was presided over by my hon. Colleague the Member for the Brightside Division of Sheffield. They say that the contemplated action in France will have a serious effect upon the woollen, worsted, and other textile trades of England, and will be, in fact, an act of commercial hostility to this country. I think, therefore, I am entitled to ask Her Majesty's Government what course they are going to take, under these circumstances, with America, France, Russia, Spain, Brazil, the Argentine, and other Foreign countries shutting out the goods of the United Kingdom by every conceivable means? I submit that the only sensible, the only practical, course is to consolidate the trade of our own Empire, to free ourselves from crippling engagements with Foreign countries, and to meet the colonies in this matter generously and with open hands. The feeling in Canada is represented in a letter received this evening from Toronto, a passage of which I will read—

> "This is the question of the hour with us in Canada now. We have just emerged from a dangerous situation with honour, Sir John Macdonald's majority being 35 in a House of 216 Members. Having rejected the proposal for Unrestricted Reciprocity or Commercial Union with the United States, the thinking people of our Dominion are in an attitude of expectancy with their faces turned to the Mother Country. What will she do to help the loyal majority here in their struggle to maintain the integrity of the Empire?"

I do not hesitate to say that from the condition of things revealed by the General Election in Canada, from the announcement of Sir John Macdonald and the facts upon which the election turned, that it is all-essential for Her Majesty's Government to take a forward step in this matter, and to do everything they possibly can to consolidate trade within the Empire. Even if they do not take any active steps towards approaching the colonies, the least they can do is to free our hands from Commercial Treaties which so long as they remain in force prohibit any closer commercial union between the Mother Country and the colonies than that which prevails at the present moment.

*(11.28.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I am in accord with my hon. Friend in desiring to promote, if we can, a closer union and greater commercial intercourse with our colonies, but I fear I cannot agree with him as to the means by which he desires to achieve his end, because I think my hon. Friend's proposal would fail to have any satisfactory results. My hon. Friend considers that the promotion of a closer commercial union

between ourselves and the colonies is seriously interfered with by the provisions of the Zollverein and Belgian Treaties to which he has referred. But what is interfered with by the provisions of those Treaties is the particular proposal which the hon. Member made to the House a short time ago for the adoption by this country and the colonies of a preferential tariff against foreign countries. That was the proposal which my hon. Friend made, but for which he has not yet obtained the sanction of Parliament. The hon. Gentleman himself admits that, so far as any arrangements of the kind he desired between the colonies themselves or between the colonies and foreign countries adjacent to them are concerned, the clause in the Belgian and the Zollverein Treaties does not prevent them. The hon. Member is aware that when these Treaties were entered into a Reciprocity Treaty between Canada and the United States was in existence, and since then has been passed the Act of 1873, which enables reciprocity arrangements of that sort to be made between our Australasian Colonies, and similar Treaties have been made in the last two or three years between our South African Colonies and the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. So it is perfectly clear that these Treaties do not prevent arrangements of that kind between our colonies or between the colonies and Foreign States. When the hon. Member asks us that we should denounce this clause in the Treaties he overlooks the fact that there are in the Treaties other clauses by which great advantages are secured to this country. For instance, the Treaty with Belgium secures to British subjects national treatment in respect of certain matters of commerce and navigation, and various other advantages of very great importance. It confers upon British subjects the right to enjoy Most Favoured Nation treatment in other matters, and there is a clause which exempts British goods from the payment of Transit Duties. The Treaty with the Zollverein conferred upon British subjects Most Favoured Nation treatment in the exercise of their Commerce and Trade, and there are stipulations upon other matters which are of great advantage.

*MR. HOWARD VINCENT: Will you allow me to ask if France and other countries enjoy similar advantages in Belgium and Germany?

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I am now referring to the advantages which we enjoy under the Treaties, an important clause of which the hon. Member asks us to denounce. If we were to denounce one clause, that would necessitate the reconsideration of the other provisions of the Treaties. Before we take this course the hon. Member must induce the House and the country to accept his policy of adopting a Preferential Tariff as between this country and our colonies against Foreign nations. We have not as yet arrived at the point the hon. Member desires, and therefore he is putting the cart before the horse. From his point of view, what is the good of denouncing Treaties, which he admits confer other advantages, before we are prepared to adopt the policy which is prevented by the clause to which he objects? Let him propagate his gospel, and when he has converted the country to his policy, then he may ask the Government to carry it out.

THE POST OFFICE AND THE MESSENGER COMPANIES.

*(11.35.) DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I rise to call attention to the position taken up by the Postmaster General with regard to the electric call and boy messenger system, and would have moved, if the Orders would have allowed—

> "That this House disapproves of the Postmaster General's refusal to allow the establishment by private agencies in this country of the electric call system, which American experience has shown to constitute a great practical public convenience."

I may briefly explain to the House of what this system consists. There is a little box, of which I hold a specimen in my hand, which the companies are ready to place in the house of any person wishing to have it without charging anything for the accommodation. The box is connected electrically with stations of the company throughout the town. By pressing one button a station is rung up and signalled to call a cab, and the cab is called. The next button gives the signal in case of fire, the third that a policeman is wanted, and the fourth that a messenger is required. The Postmaster General, being desirous to put these companies down, and constituting himself for the first time since he has held office the inexorable guardian of the public interest, says that these things constitute an infringement of the rights of the State, and proposes to institute a similar service. In this the right hon. Gentleman is progressing backwards; for in 1886, when a proposal was made to start such a company, he offered to grant it a licence for a royalty of 2s. 6d. per subscriber and one of £25 on the operations of the company. In 1887 the Boy Messenger Company was started, but without the system of electric calls, although it now desires to introduce them. It, however, availed itself of communication by telephone; and it contested the dictum of the Postmaster General, that the conveyance of written communications was any infringement of the monopoly of the Post Office. While the matter was still in this position, it might have been the right thing for the Postmaster General to have done to have had that question decided by a Court of Law; but a company arose which, disregarding all warnings as to postal monopoly, set up a system of electric calls and a service including the delivery of letters. They did not deny that in doing that there was an infraction of the postal monopoly, unless under a licence from the Postmaster General. On the question of delivering letters the second company offered a payment of 1d. on every letter. The Postmaster General has said that he intends to set up an alternative system and to keep a number of messengers at each post office, who are to carry express letters and parcels from one part of the City to another between 8 in the morning and 7 at night. Many people, however, live at some distance from a post office, and, moreover, the duty of the Post Office messenger is to be limited to carrying letters or parcels, and to 11 hours out of the 24. How, in the name of common sense, can the right hon. Gentleman contend that this covers the service offered by the private companies? The company offers, by means of their call boxes, to enable anyone to summon a messenger to his house. Now the Postmaster General makes no proposal of the kind. He tells us he is thinking of a call system; but, at the most, it would be in case a messenger is wanted to take a letter or a parcel, and unless he is prepared to put an electric call box into the house of everyone who asks for it, and to do this without charge, he will not serve the public as cheaply or as perfectly as the private companies. To show the range of work which these Messenger Companies undertake, I will read a list of some of them from a circular issued by one of them. From it, it appears that this company proposes to have boys on duty day and night, to take luggage to and from railway stations, to bring dress clothes to clubs, to deliver messages to tradesmen, to get doctors' prescriptions made up, to fetch parcels from the stores, to get cheques cashed. [*Laughter.*] That is a service which many hon. Members opposite might find would be a great convenience. ["Hear, hear!"] They also undertake to change books from the libraries, and that would probably be a service which hon. Members opposite might not so frequently call upon them to perform. Then they offer to assist in the house during an "At Home," or take dogs out for a run. That is a service which I think would appeal rather to the sympathies of the Ladies' Gallery than to hon. Members themselves. Moreover, they undertake to "clean windows and boots, and perform many other services which a smart, clean, respectable boy might be employed in." The company are responsible for those boys to the extent of £20. They further undertake to send cabs, fire-engines, and policemen. I have read a long article in the *Times* of this morning which contains the defence of the policy adopted by the Postmaster General, and a weaker case I have never read. The Postmaster General appears to be afraid that these companies would cut down the Public Revenue, which is derived from the Post Office; but that fear could not be well founded, seeing that the companies offer to pay a royalty of 1d. for each letter they carry. The writer argues against the adoption of a system of royalties, and quotes the case of the telephone. I might show how the Post Office stole the telephone, and I am sure no one can wonder if it never got much good out of an invention which it acquired in the most dishonest fashion. When Mr. Fawcett endeavoured to make reparation for that act of dishonesty he went further than justice required in the other direction, and gave the right of communication by trunk lines between large centres which enabled the private telephones to compete with the Post Office. I will not, however, go further into this; but, as far as the question in hand is concerned, namely, the carriage of express letters, I would suggest to the Postmaster General to take a big step which will be worthy of his Department, and he need fear no rivalry. Many years ago a Committee, presided over by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Leeds, recommended that the Post Office should take the first opportunity of starting a pneumatic tube system of distribution similar to that which is carried out in Paris and Berlin. In Paris for a quarter of a franc one gets a card sent at once by express pneumatic tube, and for half a franc a letter. That is what the right hon. Gentleman ought to do for us. What the right hon. Gentleman proposes to do—namely, to refer the matter to legal arbitration—is quite beside the question, and his action may be characterised, as it has been in various quarters, as nothing better than that of the dog-in-the-manger.

*(11.52.) The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. Raikes, Cambridge University): The lateness of the hour must prevent me from giving a detailed answer to the objections which the hon. Gentleman has taken to my conduct in this matter; and as I hope in a short time to obtain the decision of a Court of Law upon the main issues, it would be premature to discuss this evening what course I may be advised to take after that decision has been obtained. The hon. Member has very seriously misapprehended the action of the Department. The main question is one, not only between the Government and the District Messenger Company, but, in a much greater degree, between the Government and the Boy Messenger Company, which is simply an Express Service by means of boy messengers. The new service, of which the particulars appear on the Paper to-day, will be a far more efficient service. I would merely point out that the number of the stations will be at least double that of the Boy Messenger Company, and the number of boys employed ten times as numerous; the charge will be less, and, in fact, the new system will have every advantage which one system can have over another. I will only say that I should be very glad indeed if I could believe that I had no responsibility in the matter; but having before me the opinion of competent advisers, based upon Acts of Parliament, I am bound to believe that I should have so far a regard to the public interest that I must defend it against speculators whom I cannot allow to carry on a business which I believe is an invasion of the rights of the State. Having obtained the decision of a Court of Law, I shall be prepared to consider any proposal that may be made for utilising either of these schemes. I have been for a long time endeavouring to devise some such scheme which I might dovetail with a Department of the State; but until I obtained the assent of the Treasury to create a substitute Service, I did not feel myself justified in taking action as to which, if I had taken it at an earlier period, might have deserved the epithet the hon. Gentleman has applied to me. My desire is that the public should not suffer from any action the Government had undertaken, but I was was forced to act as I have done because I was threatened a fortnight ago by one of the clients of the hon. Gentleman with a *mandamus* to compel me to take action in the case. It was out of pure charity that I wished to utilise the boys in the service of the companies. I am sorry that the companies have refused, but the public will not suffer, because I am in a position to offer more efficient service. I am perfectly ready to consider any scheme which the public may expect advantage from as soon as I have established the right of the Post Office to exercise those privileges which are conferred upon it, not by me, but by many Acts of Parliament, the last of which was an Act passed in the first year of the reign of our present Sovereign.

(11.58.) Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): So far as his main proposition goes, there is a considerable amount of reason in what the right hon. Gentleman says. Of course, he occupies his present position simply as trustee for the public, and I cannot for a moment, myself, complain of his doing his duty. It appears that the Post Office Act has been infringed, and, therefore I do not wish to complain of what has been done by the right hon. Gentleman. Still that does not preclude the desirability of obtaining the decision of the Courts of Law as to one point of the operation of this company. But I take leave to observe that there is a good deal to be said on the general question of the convenience of the public at large.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order !

It being Midnight, the Debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow at Two of the clock.

ELECTORAL DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 182.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Causton.*)

MR. CONYBEARE: I have one or two Amendments on this, and as I believe the Government are determined to press this Bill through to-morrow afternoon, when I may not be able to be present, I hope the hon. Member will not press his Motion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): I hope the hon. Member will allow this Amendment to be disposed of.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I must press the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow at Two of the clock.

MAIL SHIPS BILL.—(No. 163.)

Considered in Committee; Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow at Two of the clock.

MERCHANDISE MARKS BILL. (No. 245.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for to-morrow at Two of the clock.

SLANDER OF WOMEN BILL.—(No. 150.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Monday, 6th April.

TRAMWAYS (IRELAND) ACT (1860) AMENDMENT BILL.—(No. 160.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Tuesday, 7th April.

STATUTORY RULES PROCEDURE BILL.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Henry H. Fowler and Sir Albert Rollit.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 260.]

REFORMATORY AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL CHILDREN BILL.

Bill ordered to be brought in by Mr. Howard Vincent, Sir Richard Temple, Mr. Whitley, Mr. Samuel Smith, Mr. Tomlinson, and Mr. John Kelly.

Bill presented, and read first time. [Bill 261.]

COUNTY COURTS SITTINGS (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Return ordered—

"Of the Sittings of the County Courts in England and Wales in the year 1890, in the following form :—

1.	Circuit and name of Judge.	
	Name of Court.	
	Specific day or days in each month on which Judge or Deputy* sat in Court during the twelve months ended 31st day of December 1890.	Month.
		Day.
2.	Number of plaints returnable at each Court.	
3.	Number of such plaints struck out in default of appearance of either party, or withdrawn, or not served.	
4.	Number of such plaints in which the claim was paid into Court prior to hearing.	
5.	Number of such plaints in which the claims were admitted, or the Defendant did not appear, inclusive of the cases under Section 86 of "The County Courts Act, 1888."	
6.	Number of such plaints heard and disposed of by the Judge himself at each sitting.	By Judge.
		By Deputy Judge.
7.	Number of such plaints the hearing of which was adjourned by consent.	
8.	Number of such plaints adjourned for want of time.	
9.	Number of matters heard by the Judge in Bankruptcy, or under Sections 65, 66, or 69 of "The County Courts Act, 1888," or under Section 17 of "The Supreme Court of Judicature Act, 1884."	
10.	Number of hours the Judge sat on each day.	

*Where the Judge sat by Deputy, the fact to be stated, and the name of the Deputy.

Totals of Circuits.

Summary, with totals.

(in continuation of Return presented to the House of Lords 5th August, 1873."—(*Mr. Henry H. Fowler.*)

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF LORDS,

Tuesday, 24th March, 1891.

REPRESENTATIVE PEERS FOR IRELAND.

Lord Teignmouth—Report made from the Lord Chancellor, that the right of Sir Charles John Shore Baron Teignmouth to vote at the elections of Representative Peers for Ireland has been established to the satisfaction of the Lord Chancellor; read and ordered to lie on the Table.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.—(No. 78.)

Returned from the Commons with the amendments made by the Lords to the Commons amendments to the Lords amendments agreed to.

House adjourned at twenty minutes before Six o'clock, to Thursday next, Twelve o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Tuesday, 24th March, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

ARMY OFFICERS.

SIR H. HAVELOCK-ALLAN (Durham, S.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if, in view of the large number of Majors, most of whom hold the post of second in command, who are each month being removed from their regiments owing to the operation of the 48 years age clause, he would be prepared to place in the hands of H.R.H. the Commander-in-Chief discretionary power which would enable him to recommend the retention in their regiments for a short fixed period after this age is reached, of certain officers who, in the opinion of His Royal Highness, possess special fitness for the position of Regimental or Battalion Commandant?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): Yes, Sir; I propose to submit to Her Majesty an alteration in the Warrant which would give a discretionary power of the character described by my hon. and gallant Friend.

THE SAVINGS BANK.

MR. SEAGER HUNT (Marylebone, W.): I beg to ask the Postmaster General whether there was any foundation for the statement that appeared in the *Daily News* and other papers of the 12th January, to the effect that the 50 superintending officers of the Savings Bank had requested their Controller to represent to him (the Postmaster General) the discontent prevailing through all sections of the Department; whether he had received a Memorial, on the 17th January, from 75 clerks of the old Second Class to the same effect, and another, on the 20th January, from 270 clerks of the Second Division, asking for an inquiry into the state of the Department; and what action he proposes to take thereupon?

*THE POSTMASTER GENERAL (Mr. RAIKES, Cambridge University): The facts are as follow:—The Controller of the Savings Bank, in January last, summoned the high officers of his Department and expressed his fear that they had not exercised over their subordinates the influence which it was expected they would have exerted. They replied that they had most emphatically discountenanced the action of the junior officers of the Savings Bank, and assured the Controller of their thorough loyalty to the Department. They took advantage of the opportunity to urge their view that they ought all to have better salaries, and their regret that that view was not shared by the authorities. I have received the Memorials of the 17th and 20th January, referred to, and have answered them. I do not see any necessity for the inquiry asked for; but I hope very soon to be able to adopt measures greatly to reduce the extra duty, which appears to me to constitute a reasonable and legitimate grievance.

EXPLOSIONS IN IRONWORKS.

DR. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he has yet come to any decision regarding the institution of a public inquiry into the recent fatal explosions at ironworks in Glasgow and Gartsherric, concerning which he was questioned last week?

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. MATTHEWS, Birmingham E.): I am informed by the Secretary for Scotland that he is not at present in a position to say whether a public inquiry would be advisable, the matter still being under investigation by the Criminal Authorities in the usual manner.

CEYLON—HARBOUR ACCOMMODATION.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for the Colonies whether his attention has been drawn to the fact that the tonnage of vessels frequenting the harbour of Colombo, Ceylon, in 1890, exceeded the tonnage of 1889 by 185,000 tons, and the tonnage of 1889 that of 1888 by 576,000 tons; also that on more than one occasion lately, all the port accommodation was taken up, and steamers had to anchor outside the harbour from want of room, though they were anxious to obtain the protection and facilities offered by the port; whether, under these circumstances, the Government will consider the question of the construction of the "northern arm" to the harbour, and will promptly consider and give an answer to the Memorial addressed to the Secretary of State by the Chamber of Commerce of Ceylon, on the 21st of November, 1888, on this subject; and if the Secretary of State for the Colonies has already replied on the subject of that Memorial, what was his reply?

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Baron H. de WORMS, Liverpool, East Toxteth): The question of a northern arm to the Colombo harbour has been recently again raised, and the Papers are now under the consideration of the consulting engineers. The Memorial, of the date referred to, related to questions of account, with a view to show that the construction of the existing breakwater had been remunerative, and a reply was sent at the time, expressing the general concurrence of the Secretary of State in the views of the Memorialists.

INFLAMMABLE LIQUIDS BILL.

MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether, having regard to the number of Notices of rejection of the Inflammable Liquids Bill on the Order Book, and to the possible effects of further uncertainty in raising the prices of the cheaper qualities of oils, he will withdraw the Bill?

SIR E. BIRKBECK desired to ask his right hon. Friend whether he really realised the strong feeling there was with reference to this Bill among the small shopkeepers in the rural districts; and whether he would not withdraw the Bill and refer the whole subject—not the Bill—to a Select Committee?

MR. MATTHEWS: My hon. Friend the Member for Norfolk (Sir E. Birkbeck) will see that I have anticipated his question in the answer I am about to give to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Channing). The Notices of opposition to this Bill are so numerous as to render its chances of passing this year very remote. I propose, therefore, as soon as the Memorandum, which will be issued in a few days, is before the House, to move that a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the whole subject, and to await their Report before asking the House to legislate.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether he can inform the House which of Her Majesty's ships of war are employed off the Canadian coast or the coast of Newfoundland, in keeping the peace between the fishermen of Newfoundland and those of France; what part, if any, of the expense of thus protecting the interests of the fisheries in Newfoundland is borne by the colonists, or whether it is wholly borne by the taxpayers of this country; and whether it is true that the Canadian Authorities have refused to submit the claims of the fishermen to arbitration?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): Her Majesty's ships *Emerald*, *Pelican*, and *Forward* were employed in 1890 on fishery duty on the coast of Newfoundland, and, as this is part of their ordinary duty, the whole cost is defrayed from Naval Votes. The Canadian Authorities have no control over Newfoundland.

MRS. MARY CATHCART.

DR. FITZGERALD (Longford, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, with regard to the seizure of Mrs. Mary Cathcart, if he will state the name of the doctor who signed the certificate previous to her seizure under an urgency order; if the doctor examined her by addressing the lady without her consent in one of the Courts in which she was defending an action; if the doctor was employed by the plaintiff in the said action; if the doctor is one of the medical men who afterwards signed a certificate for Mrs. Cathcart's detention in a private lunatic asylum; if the plaintiff in the action referred to is the person who procured the urgency order; and is he aware that Mrs. Cathcart has made several applications to see her friends, and that all access to her has been refused by the Lunacy Commissioners, acting under the authority of the plaintiff in the action which Mrs. Cathcart was engaged in defending at the time of her seizure?

MR. MATTHEWS: The Commissioners of Lunacy inform me that Dr. Thomas Bond signed the certificate upon which the urgency order was founded; and they believe that he addressed Mrs. Cathcart in one of the Courts, where she was (as they are informed) for the purpose of a Divorce Court motion. The Commissioners have no information as to the third paragraph. The answer to the fourth paragraph is, Yes. The urgency order was signed by Mrs. Cathcart's husband. The Commissioners have refused two applications to see Mrs. Cathcart. They have done so in the interest of the patient, and wholly without reference to any other interest or person. Mrs. Cathcart has had several interviews with a solicitor selected by herself.

MINING INSPECTORS' REPORTS.

MR. PICKARD (York, W.R., Normanton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he is able to state when the Statistical Abstract of Mining Inspectors' Reports for 1890 will be issued to Members?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed that the Statistical Abstract of Mining Inspectors' Reports for 1890 will be ready for issue by Thursday next.

PRISON WARDERS.

MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many warders are at present employed in the prisons of England and Wales as Acting Governors and Acting Matrons respectively; and how many temporary warders are employed in those prisons instead of regular warders? I beg also to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he has considered the Petition of the prison warders, drawing attention to excessive hours of duty, and other grievances; and whether he is prepared to introduce some amelioration of their conditions of service?

MR. MATTHEWS: I am informed by the Prison Commissioners that there are 12 chief warders in charge of prisons in England and Wales, and 32 female warders who have charge of the female Department in those prisons. The number of temporary warders necessarily varies from day to day according to the requirements of the Service. A Departmental Committee is now sitting for the purpose of investigating fully the grievances of these officers, and I await their Report before coming to any decision.

SECOND DIVISION CLERKS.

MR. KELLY (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether no promotion of clerks to the higher grade of the Second Division, with the exception of a few already in receipt of £250 per annum, has been made; and whether, seeing that such promotion was provided for by the Order in Council issued some 12 months ago, he can say when the question of such promotion, on which he stated on 17th June, 1890, that material progress had been made, is likely to be finally settled?

THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N.): I am desired by my right hon. Friend to say that at the present moment he is unable to answer the question. He has not yet been able to obtain the necessary information.

THE LABOUR COMMISSION.

MR. HOWELL: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is in a position to state to the House the terms of Reference relating to the proposed Royal Commission on Labour; and whether he is in a position to give the names of the proposed Commissioners?

MR. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe) had a similar Question on the Paper.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): I regret I am not in a position to give the information asked for. It is not, I think, desirable that I should give the terms of Reference without giving at the same time the names of the Commissioners, and this last information is not yet complete owing to the delay which has taken place in answering the invitation of the Government to serve on the Commission. I hope, however, that the Commission will be completed in the course of a day or two.

INTOXICATING LIQUOR IN MILITARY RECREATION ROOMS.

MR. J. E. ELLIS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in November last, orders were issued by the Military Authorities in Cork and Dublin authorising the issue to soldiers of intoxicating liquor in the Coffee and Recreation Rooms; and, if so, whether this is in accordance with the Queen's Regulations (*inter alia*):—Section xv., 84 (1st October, 1889)—

> "The Coffee Room . . . . is maintained for the supply of refreshments of the following nature: tea, coffee, cocoa, non-alcoholic drinks, soup, fish, eggs, bacon, cooked and preserved meats, &c."

Section xv., 104—

> "Smoking may be allowed in the Recreation Room, subject to the approval of Commanding Officers, and arrangements may also be made for the supply of tea, or coffee, or other refreshments at a regulated price; but the introduction of wine, beer, or spirits, under any pretence, is strictly prohibited."

*MR. E. STANHOPE: I find that an experiment has been made in Ireland by the Local Military Authorities of allowing men to purchase one pint of beer with their supper in the Recreation Room. This has been done as tending, in their opinion, to reduce outside drinking. The matter has not been before brought to my notice, and all I should like to say at present is that I will communicate with the Commander-in-Chief in Ireland on the subject.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES (IRELAND) ACT.

DR. FITZGERALD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) Act expires this Session, and if he intends to move its renewal?

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): The question whether the Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) Act should be included in the Expiring Laws Continuance Bill of this Session will be duly considered.

IRISH DISTRESS.

MR. DALTON (Donegal, W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will lay upon the Table of the House a copy of the Local Government Board Inspector's Report on the state of Ranafast, and the entire parish of Lower Templecrone; also the Police Reports on the same parish; and whether, as he has already admitted that there is considerable distress in Lower Templecrone, which was causing the Government great anxiety, the Government propose to start immediately some relief works, such as road-making, in the district?

MR. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I also beg to ask the Chief Secretary whether he will state what has been actually done to relieve the distress in Ranafast, Lower Templecrone, County Donegal; and whether he will himself read the Report sent in by the Local Government Board Inspector after a house to house visitation in that district?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Minute inquiries are being made into the matter, but at present no decision has been arrived at.

THE TOWN POSTMAN AT WATERFORD.

MR. R. POWER (Waterford): I beg to ask the Postmaster General if his attention has been called to the case of James Whittaker, town postman at Waterford, dismissed for alleged abusive language to a policeman, which language James Whittaker denies having used, and states that he can bring evidence to that effect; and whether, inasmuch as the case against Whittaker rests on the unsupported word of a policeman, while Whittaker who is an *employé* of the Post Office of nine years' standing and good character, can produce evidence in his favour, he will cause further inquiry to be made into the case?

*MR. RAIKES: James Whittaker was dismissed, not for abusive language to the police—which as the hon. Member states, Whittaker denies having employed—but for obstructing the police in the discharge of their duties. Whittaker had been appointed less than three months before the occurrence took place, and was still on probation. I shall be willing, however, if Whittaker expresses his sincere regret for his conduct, to allow him to resume duty, on probation, as an auxiliary postman.

THE IRISH MAILS.

CAPTAIN M'CALMONT (Antrim, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he can now make any statement relative to the proposed mail route to and from the North of Ireland by Larne and Stranraer?

MR. JACKSON: I am sorry that I am unable to give my hon. Friend the answer he desires, but I have not yet been able to obtain a final decision on the question.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): May I ask what will be the Order of Business on the re-assembling of the House after the Easter holidays?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: The Bills on the Paper for consideration to-day will be proceeded with on Monday after the Recess, and, if not reached on Monday, will be proceeded with on the following day.

ENDOWED CHARITIES (SUFFOLK).

Return ordered—

"Of the Digest of Endowed Charities in the County of Suffolk, the particulars of which are recorded in the Books of the Charity Commissioners for England and Wales, but are not recorded in the General Digest of Endowed Charities in that county, 1871-4 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No, 243 (2), of Session 1875).—(*Mr. James William Lowther.*)

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (RULES AS TO PURCHASE).

Copy ordered "Of Rules of Irish Land Commission relating to Land Purchase." (*Mr. John Ellis.*)

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

TITHE RENT-CHARGE RECOVERY BILL.

(No. 251.)

Lords Amendments to Commons Amendments to Lords Amendments, and Lords Amendment in lieu of the Amendment disagreed to by the Commons, considered.

Lords Amendment, in lieu of the Amendment disagreed to by the Commons, page 2, line 23, after the word "powers," to insert the words—

> "And if there is no sufficient distress the person entitled to the sum ordered to be recovered may proceed to obtain possession of the lands under section eighty-two of 'The Tithe Act, 1836,'"

the first Amendment, read a second time.

*(2.30.) MR. C. W. GRAY (Essex, Maldon): I propose that the House should not agree with this Amendment, and I will explain briefly the position which I take.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Mid Glamorgan (Mr. S. T. Evans) has an Amendment on the Paper which will come first.

MR. S. T. EVANS (Glamorgan, Mid): I propose to insert in the Lords Amendment before the word "and," the words "but in any case where such lands have become derelict lands." The object of this Amendment is to limit the operation of the writ of *habere facias possessionem* to cases where the land is derelict, and to restore the Bill to the position in which it stood before any Amendment was inserted in it. As the clause now stands, it would entail great hardship upon small yeoman farmers who occupy their own land, and my proposal will have the effect of confining this proposal to derelict lands.

Amendment proposed to the said Amendment, before the first word "and," to insert the words "but in any case where such lands have become derelict lands."—(*Mr. S. T. Evans.*)

Question proposed, "That those words be there inserted."

*(2.32.) THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I do not think that the House ought to agree to the Amendment. The writ does not now apply to derelict farms only, and there is no reason why it should. I may instance a case which is within my own knowledge. A gentleman had a large house in the country with a park of considerable extent around it. One part of the park, including the building, was in one parish and the rest in another parish, and it would be possible so to arrange as to prevent the tithe owner in the second parish from levying any distres upon the land in that parish. The object of the Lords Amendment is merely to retain in the cases dealt with by the clause, the powers conferred by the existing law.

*(2.34.) MR. F. S. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): The Lords' Amendment as it is now sent down to us differs only from their first Amendment in phraseology, and I object to it as bearing hardly on the yeoman farmer. It provides that if there is no sufficient distress the person entitled to the sum ordered to be recovered may proceed to obtain possession of the lands under Section 82 of the Tithe Act, 1836. That practically amounts to the same thing; the difference being simply between "tweedledum and tweedledee."

(2.36.) SIR H. DAVEY (Stockton): As I interpret the Lords' Amendment, it brings into operation the whole machinery of the 82nd section of the Act of 1836. Therefore a person desiring to obtain possession under the 82nd section must adopt the procedure indicated in that section.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): Hear, hear!

*(2.37.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: May I be allowed a word in explanation? The change in phraseology adopted by the Lords makes it clear that the existing law is to be maintained. The Amendment, as sent down by the Lords before, might have been interpreted as making a considerable alteration in the existing law, and it did, in fact, make one alteration—the substitution of a decision of the County Court for the interposition of a jury.

*(2.38.) MR. CHANNING (Northampton, E.): The right hon. Gentleman says that no alteration is made in the existing law. I am of a different opinion, and I shall support the Amendment moved by my hon. Friend in this sense, that there is a valid distinction between derelict farms and holdings upon which there have been reasonable concessions between the landlord and tenant in regard to the value of agricultural produce. If Her Majesty's Government are prepared consistently to follow out the object with which the Bill was introduced last year, they ought to find some way out of the difficulty.

The House divided:—Ayes 41; Noes 100.—(Div. List, No. 102.)

(2.45.) MR. S. T. EVANS: My next Amendment is consequent upon the one which has just been rejected, and, therefore, I do not move it.

Question, "That this House doth agree with the Lords Amendment," put, and agreed to.

The next Amendment was—The Lords agree to the Amendment made by the Commons to the Lords Amendment in page 2, line 28, of the Bill as first printed by the Lords, with the following Amendments:—In the words added by the Commons leave out "officer" and insert "receiver," and leave out "him" and insert "the occupier."

*(2.46.) MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member for Maldon (Mr. Gray) has given notice of Amendments to this Amendment, but his object will be gained by simply negativing the proposal formally made by the Government "that the House agree with the Lords Amendment." If the Lords Amend-

ment is rejected the hon. Member can then move an alternative proposition.

*(2.47.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I beg to move that the House do agree with the Lords Amendment.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Sir M. Hicks Beach.*)

*MR. C. W. GRAY: I sincerely trust that the House will not agree with these Amendments. In the Bill, when first presented, there was no reference to occupation by the tithe owner.

*(2.48.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: My hon. Friend is quite mistaken. The words in the Bill provided that the officer of the Court should have the same right of recovery as now, which included the right of entry. In Committee the word "recovery" was altered to "distraint" at the request of the right hon. Member for Derby (Sir W. Harcourt).

*(2.49.) MR. C. W. GRAY: I am obliged to the right hon. Gentleman for the explanation. During the passage of the Bill through the House it was considered in the interests of the tithe owner that this particular point required alteration, and there was subsequently a proposal of *habere facias possessionem*, which proposal, however, did not appear until after the Second Reading of the Bill. We discussed that provision, which empowered the tithe owner to cultivate the land under certain circumstances, and it was pointed out that as so much was done for the tithe owner, there might be some little concession in the interests of the occupier. This question affects only the occupying owner. We are dealing with cases where there is nothing to distrain upon, and I take it that the only cases in which this power of taking possession would be enforced are those in which the yeoman farmer is practically a ruined man, for that would be his position generally speaking before he allowed a tithe owner to come in and mismanage his occupation. Step by step the position of the tithe owner in reference to these cases of taking possession has been strengthened by the action of this and the other House, and it appears to me that there has been a gradual turning of the screw on the yeoman farmer to his disadvantage and the advantage of the tithe owner. The process has, no doubt, been slow and insidious, but the effect may be clearly seen by comparing the present position of the farmer with his position before 1836. The position prior to 1836 was this: the farmer could so farm his land that the tithe owner could not claim one single article produced from it, or one single halfpenny in lieu of tithe. To day, however, the farmer may be made to pay his very last drop of blood. I am not saying this in an offensive way or in a bitter spirit. His last halfpenny can, in fact, be taken from him, and this change has been effected by occasional innocent turns of the screw. I hope the House will not now give this extra turn. May I point out that at one stage of the proceedings the Government did not attach much importance to this point, for though the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the Bill has since candidly said he does not feel entirely tied by the words he used on the occasion I am going to refer to, he did, when we were discussing this very principle, declare he had never regarded the right of entry of the tithe owner as a right of serious value or importance; and if it were to be complicated by the question of compensation he did not think any injury would be done to the owner of tithe rent charge by omitting it from the Bill. After having discussed this subject over and over again we had a proposal from the other House and various proposals from the Front Bench in this House, which eventually resulted in the adoption of the *habere facias possessionem* principle, in accordance with Section 82 of the Tithe Act of 1836, it being further provided that such person obtaining possession should, while in possession, be under an obligation not to permit or commit any waste. Next we had an offer from the Front Bench to insert words securing that the land shall be cultivated in a husbandlike manner according to the custom of the country, and that the person taking possession if he lets the land should bind his tenant so to cultivate it. But now we are told that these matters must simply be dealt with under the old Commutation Act of 1836. Probably my hon. Friend the

Member for Stockport will tell us that, if we so greatly preferred the first offer of the Government to the one now sent down from the House of Lords, we ought to have accepted the former when we had the chance. But when that offer was under discussion, I pointed out that I did not think it sufficiently safeguarded the interests of the yeoman farmer. If we are to be told that because we did not accept that offer we shall have nothing given us now, it is treating us as if we were schoolboys, and as this is a question of great importance to the yeoman farmer it ought not to be approached in that spirit. It is all very well for hon. Members to say this is a Bill for the simple purpose of enforcing the payment of tithe in Wales. The measure affects the whole of England, and especially a class of men who have suffered extremely from the agricultural depression—I mean the yeoman farmers of East Anglia. Surely they deserve some consideration at the hands of the Government. If the first offer of the Government did not go quite far enough that is no reason why something very much worse should be insisted on. Probably I shall be told that the provisions of the Act of 1836, which will be put into operation, will cover most of the points we have raised, especially with regard to the waste of land. But if that be so, why did the Government take the trouble to draft the *habere facias possessionem* clause at all. I can only say I hope that the House will not accept this Amendment in the form it has come from the Lords. I hope that the Party which has so ably championed the interests of the Church of England will show a little more conciliation than they have yet done—I hope they will see it will be to the interest of their Church not to be too hard-hearted; I do not blame them for trying to get every penny legally due to them, but in dealing with so complicated and intricate a question as this I say it behoves a religious body—be it Church or Dissent—to study the principles of fairness and justice even to the extent of generosity.

*(3.5.) SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I must demur to the interests of the yeoman farmer being put forward invidiously as compared with the interests of other landholders. It is neither right

nor reasonable. What is fair to the large landholder must be fair to the small landholder. I deny emphatically that there has been any effort to put the screw on the yeoman farmer.

*MR. C. W. GRAY: I am sorry to interrupt the right hon. Gentleman, but he will remember that when I referred to the turning of the screw I was comparing the present position of the yeoman farmer with that which he occupied prior to the Act of 1836, and I said the screw had been turned gradually at one period and another.

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Very well; I will modify the expression. I say there is no turn of the screw here. The right which the Lords' Amendment gives to the tithe owner he already possesses under the Act of 1836. Again, the words which the Lords have struck out were mere surplusage, because by the law, as it at present stands, the tithe owner upon taking possession will be compelled to cultivate the land in a proper manner, because he is bound not to permit or commit waste. Moreover the provisions of this Bill are not, as the hon. Member seems to think, generally to the disadvantage of the occupying owner, who is now just as liable to be distrained upon, and in the absence of distraint to have his land entered upon, as he will be if the Lords' Amendment becomes law. The only difference is that the distraint will be carried out by the officer of the Court instead of by the tithe owner. And as to the Bill drawing from the yeoman farmer his last drop of blood, it will, on the contrary, give him this great advantage—that whereas he may now be distrained upon for the whole amount of the tithe, whatever the annual value of his land, in future he will only be distrained upon to the amount of two-thirds of the assessment of the land to Schedule B of the Income Tax. The fact is, that the position of the tithe-payer will be considerably improved under the Bill, and I hope the hon. Member will not persist in his opposition. Although the Government at one time were willing to insert words putting an obligation on the tithe owner taking possession not to permit or commit waste, I have since discovered, from the highest authority, that such a proviso was absolutely unnecessary, as the tithe owner is already under a distinct obligation of this nature, and is liable to be mulcted in damages for disregarding it. My hon. Friend must recollect that "waste" is a very wide term; it not only covers the breaking up of grass lands for arable purposes, but also the improper cultivation of arable lands. Therefore, these words were pure surplusage. Although my hon. Friend was willing to accept my offer to insert words compelling the tithe owner to cultivate the lands according to the custom of the country, it did not prevent his opposition to the clause, and I am bound to say that his action on that and on other occasions has not led me to believe that any attempt to propitiate him has resulted in any advantage, so far as the progress of the Bill was concerned. I do not for that reason, however, withdraw my offer; but because, on the merits of the words themselves, I am very glad they were not inserted in the Bill, because the effect might have been to confine the obligations on the tithe owner to properly cultivate arable land, while he would have had a free hand in breaking up pasturage.

*Mr. C. W. GRAY: They were not my words.

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: I do not charge the hon. Member with the responsibility of the words; I am only pointing out what would have been their effect. I hope the House will be content to accept this Amendment without any lengthened Debate. It does not alter the existing law, nor does it place the tithe owner in any better position than he now occupies.

*(3.15.) Mr. F. S. STEVENSON: We are labouring under considerable disadvantage in having to discuss this without having before us the Amendments made by the Commons in the Lords' Amendments. In the first place, hon. Members do not realise that Sub-section 3 has disappeared altogether. The question is whether, if the Lords Amendment in its new form is accepted, there will be sufficient security for the proper cultivation of the land. I decline to admit that the words which the Lords have struck out are mere surplusage, and I appeal to the Attorney General to say under what provision a tithe owner on taking possession can be prevented from committing or permitting waste. The only provision I am aware of is in Section 83 of the Commutation Act of 1836, and there there is no mention of waste. Unless some provision such as was in the Bill before it went to the Lords is provided, the value of the land may be considerably depreciated, because the tithe owner may not, in some cases, take the trouble, or provide the necessary skill and energy to cultivate the land to the utmost advantage.

*(3.17.) Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE (Stockport): The tithe owner has two remedies against the occupying owner: distraint and taking possession, and he can only use the second in case the first fails. One could almost count on the fingers of one hand the cases in which, during the last five-and-fifty years, the tithe owner has actually put in force the remedy of taking possession. The threat was almost always sufficient. I know a case in which I acted professionally, in which a clergyman recovered his tithe from one of the richest men in the country simply by threatening a writ of possession. But if the power is taken away, the tithe owner in the case of pasture lands may lose his income, and be left without any remedy at all; because the occupier, having driven off his cattle and left nothing to distrain upon, might snap his fingers at the tithe owner. I have a letter here from a country rector in Suffolk, pointing out that in his case £300 of his tithe comes from pasture land, 50 occupying owners paying an average of £6, and if they found he would be left without remedy, if there were nothing on the land to distrain upon, they might take care the cattle were removed. I think the Legislature ought not to deprive the tithe owner of this remedy. Then the hon. Member says there is no provision against waste. But there is no necessity for such a provision. I speak under correction, but I have good authority for saying that there is nobody but an absolute owner in fee simple who is not liable for damage or waste. Everyone who holds land, whether he be mortgagee, trustee, or tenant, unless there is absolute provision for the contrary, is liable for damage or waste, and the tithe owner will be in exactly the same position when

he enters on possession. To attempt to take away this remedy for recovery because there is no provision against waste would be foolish, inasmuch as such a provision is in no way necessary.

*(3.21.) MR. CHANNING: The hon. Member seemed to prefer an imputation against hon. Members on this side—and I am not sure whether he included the hon. Member for Maldon also—that we wish to withdraw from the tithe owner altogether the remedy of entering on possession, but no one wishes to make any such suggestion. What we do say, and what we intend to affirm as far as we can, is that this right of taking possession as a means of recovering tithe rent-charge when payment is withheld should be accompanied by equitable conditions. With all respect to what has fallen from the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, will he allow me by simple analogy to point out how the argument of the hon. Member who has just spoken in reference to waste falls to the ground? Those who are familiar with proceedings under the Agricultural Holdings Act will know that it is a just illustration. The landlord, where a claim under the Act is not set up, does not in general require payment for waste and dilapidation; but whenever the tenant does set up a claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act, then the landlord sets up his counter claim from the farmer. The practical effect of this is to show that the remedy at Common Law for waste is one which fails to be exercised even in the hands of the most powerful members of the community, and it is therefore wholly inadequate to hold out this general principle as a remedy to which the poor farmer may appeal. I hold that the words suggested on a previous occasion by the President of the Board of Trade clearly defining the duty of the tithe owner that he shall cultivate according to good husbandry, and in a suitable way according to the custom of the district, and avoid the commission or permission of waste, are words that are required for the protection of the tenant. It should be clearly and definitely laid down in this Act, not left as a remedy in the background that may be appealed to on general principles, and by application to the High Court. Let it be here as a remedy before the farmer, and to which he can refer in his communication with the tithe owner or agent. One other point I would call attention to. It seems to me that this Amendment now sent down from the Lords very much aggravates the incidence of this procedure against the tenant occupier. So far as I can follow the procedure under the 82nd section of the Tithe Act of 1836, it will be much more costly than the procedure provided in the previous Amendment sent down from the Lords, and which this House, at the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman, very wisely dissented from. Heavier costs will be inflicted on the yeoman farmer, while, at the same time, the security against injury to his land will be diminished.

(3.25.) MR. JEFFREYS (Hants, Basingstoke): Although this same power of entering into possession has existed for the last 55 years, it has been very rarely exercised. My hon. Friend, who has taken much interest in tithe questions, only knows of one instance where the tithe owner availed himself of the power in default of payment of tithe. The fact is, that although it is a power that might be exercised or, as the hon. Member for Stockport says, threatened to be used, it has really been very little used. I venture to suggest to my hon. Friend (Mr. Gray) that he has rather exaggerated the importance of this subject. Let us take the case of a yeoman farmer, say with 100 acres, paying a high tithe of say 5s. an acre, and amounting to the comparatively small sum of £25, which on the ordinary tithe average would be reduced to £20. I think in such a case as that the yeoman farmer would never be likely to incur the penalty of the loss of his land for the sake of such a sum as that. I cannot help thinking that my hon. Friend exaggerates the importance of the subject. The remedy has existed for 55 years as a reserve, which sometimes has been threatened, to secure payment of tithe; and if it remains now, it is not likely to affect landowner or occupier more in the future than in the past, and, for my part, I do not think it is worth fighting about.

*(3.27.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I recognise in this Amendment another attempt on the part of the Church Party to get as much as they can out of the owners and occupiers of land. I gather that from the speech of the hon. Member for Maldon, who understands this question thoroughly, and has done his best throughout these discussions on behalf of the occupiers of land. But that the ties of Party discipline are too strong, I am sure there are many hon. Members on the other side who would support him with their votes. The hon. Member has described this Amendment as another turn of the screw, and I have no doubt it is so. It should be observed that in the other House not only is the Church directly interested in this matter, but there is a strong representation of owners of Church livings. I do not know how many Church livings are owned by Members of the House of Lords, but certainly a great many, and hence there there is a strong interest in keeping up Church incomes for the benefit of relatives and friends. I am sorry to see that some Churchmen regard this matter solely from that pointof view—I mean the getting as much as possible out of a Church living. They do not care how they get the money or from whom they get it so long as they do get it, and this is an opinion I have formed not only from observation, but from personal experience. Some two or three years ago a clergyman for his own benefit put the law in motion for the redemption of tithe on some property of mine. I did not want the tithe redeemed, but the parson did, and he had his way, and I unwillingly had to pay all the expenses. I found, on calculating the cost, that I had been charged more than I ought to have paid, and that I, the leaseholder, was mulcted for the freeholder's share. So I went to the agent and the Land Commissioners, and they said, "Yes, it is quite correct; you are paying everybody's share. We get it from you because it is easier to do so, and you must get it from the freeholder as best you can." That is an illustration of what the Church has done within my own knowledge, and similar is the effect of this Amendment. But I should like to see the Church turn its attention in other directions than this attempt to get money by turnings of the screw for its wealthier members who leave the actual Church work to others. In my own parish the rector takes all the tithe and leaves more than three-fourths of the work to be done by clergymen who get no share of either tithe or religions of the parish. I regret to see this action of the Church, and we ought to resist this Amendment introduced by the House of Lords in the interest of the Church Party and to the injury of those who till the ground.

(3.30.) MR. STAVELEY HILL (Staffordshire, Kingswinford): I simply wish to explain why I shall vote with my hon. Friend the Member for Maldon. It seems to me that if this is a remedy which is to be very seldom applied then it is scarcely worth while retaining it; but if this drastic remedy is to be continued, then, in fairness, let it be alleviated in every possible reasonable way.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON (St. Pancras, N.): I look upon legislation in respect to tithe rent-charge from a national point of view. Over and over again it has been admitted on this side, though just now it seems to be forgotten, that tithe is national property, used at the present time for Church purposes; but by-and-by, as many of us hope, to be devoted to public purposes, after fairly considering the claims of vested interests. Having in mind that this is a vast national fund, it behoves us to preserve it for the benefit of the people. This fund arises from a charge upon the land, and unless you provide full security for its recovery it will disappear, or almost certainly its redemption value—and a Commission is now considering this question of redemption—will be materially reduced. There are only two ways of recovering the tithe—first, by distress; and, secondly, if there is not sufficient distress by taking possession of the land. The public have the greatest interest in preserving this right to possession; it is part of the hold which the public have on the titheable land of the country, and if you abandon that and leave only recovery by distress you reduce the value of this national property. Necessarily you do this if you make recovery more difficult and expensive, not to say, in some cases, making recovery impossible. Therefore, I would suggest to my Radical friends that they should not weaken the public hold upon this property which the right of possession gives. Let this power to take possession remain as a reserve in the background. I am sure it would be a fatal mistake to give it up and rely simply upon the power of distraint. It is very easy indeed for owner and tenant to collude together and shift the stock liable to distraint from one part of the land to another, when a distraint is apprehended, and it will be easier to do that if the owner is in occupation. Therefore, as the only remedy distress is insufficient, and the right of possession is necessary to keep the value of this public property unimpaired. I join in the expression of opinion of the hon. Member for Maldon that the procedure provided by the Tithe Acts is somewhat cumbrous under which three writs from the Superior Court are required—first, a writ of inquiry, then a writ of possession, then a writ of supersedeas. A simpler process is desirable. I would follow on the lines of the transfer of the power of distress to the County Court, and give the County Court Judge jurisdiction to order possession of the land, to superintend possession of the land, and to discharge the tithe receiver from possession when his claim is satisfied. I think it is a great pity that a simpler and less expensive procedure has not been adopted, but I suppose it has been found difficult to shape a fresh clause in the limited time at the disposal of the Government, and it has been thought better to preserve the ultimate remedy exactly as it is. I daresay the right hon. Gentleman will quite sympathise with this opinion, and he will admit that this process for the time is preserved for want of a better. But I have no doubt that at an early period the Act will require to be amended in this respect, and a less expensive process will be substituted. I echo the remarks of the right hon. Gentleman as to the advantages secured by the Bill. Advantages have been secured both by landowner and tithe receiver. In the first place, there is the process of distress conducted by a public officer.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must confine himself to the Amendment before the House.

*MR. T. H. BOLTON: I will not go beyond that. I only wish to urge my hon. Friends on this side of the House to preserve this public property while making reasonable changes connected with it; and not to allow their natural disposition to oppose Government propositions to lead them to sacrifice their principles.

(3.40.) MR. S. T. EVANS: I had not intended to intervene in this particular discussion, but the speech we have just heard calls for a few words of reply. Let me inform the hon. Member for St. Pancras, who has the impression that we may not maintain the principle for which he contends, that that is exactly what we have been doing, but we have not always found the hon. Member in the Lobby with us. A more extraordinary speech in favour of the clause than that just delivered I have never heard. First the hon. Member says he sympathises with the Government in their difficulty in dealing with the matter; then he says the procedure is cumbrous and likely to be attended with a great deal of trouble and expense. He sympathises with the Government in their difficulty, and I am sure the Government sympathise with him in his anxiety to assist the tithe owner to recover the tithe, however inequitably it may press upon the tithepayer. In dealing with this clause and the writ of possession, our anxiety is not to take away any right the tithe owner has at present, but to make it fair and equitable towards the tithepayer also. The hon. Member says the Government have had but a short space of time to deal with the matter, but, supporter of the Government as he is, he is satisfied with the clause, though he admits it is cumbrous and expensive. But what have we to do with that? We have to consider whether the clause is a proper one to pass. The Government have occupied nearly all the time since we met after the Christmas holidays with this Bill; and even with the assistance of the hon. Gentleman and his knowledge of tithe questions, the clause is cumbrous and expensive, and we say unjust to the tithepayer. But the hon.

Member gets up and makes a speech in the interest of the tithe owner, taking a large expansive view of this as a national question, which only he has happened to comprehend. I say let the Government and their supporters on this side take more time if they have not had sufficient time to deal with this matter. We are dealing with an Amendment brought in from another place—an Amendment which is, on the face of it, inequitable. You have admitted it is insufficient by hanging to it provisions which are not in the present clause——

*SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Because they are the law now.

MR. S. T. EVANS: The Bill does not contain the provisions you thought necessary before. If it is the law now, it was equally the law when the Amendment was proposed. It was not contended when the Bill was going through Committee that waste and improper cultivation were provided for.

SIR R. WEBSTER: It was distinctly stated by myself that the law provided for it now.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Then it was a peculiar thing to add words which were meaningless, and which, according to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, would be less efficacious now. The hon. Member for St. Pancras seems to think that the Bill will in a short time require amendment. Is not the present the time to amend it, when we point out that it is unjust, unfair, and unworkable? If more time is required to consider a more reasonable method of procedure, let the Bill stand over until after the Easter Recess, and see if you cannot adopt a more reasonable method of preserving the tithe owners' property without harsh and inequitable treatment of the tithepayer.

*(3.46.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I confess to finding great difficulty in following the legal view in this matter. I believe the clause has three distinct legal processes to be gone through prior to the entering upon possession of the land, and for all these proceedings and applications the expenses are to fall upon the tithepayer. Then these Lords Amendments are rushed upon us before we have really had time to consider their bearing properly. I only received them a few hours ago amid the enormous mass of papers one gets daily, and I have not been able—and I am sure other hon. Members have not been able—to follow the references to lines in the Bill and previous Amendments backwards and forwards. Even those learned in the law on either side have taken different views of the meaning and intention of many of the Amendments. To the astuteness of the Attorney General these things present no difficulty; but I can only envy the possession of powers which are denied to the common mind. I can speak as a tithe owner, and I say I have found it impossible, in the time allowed, to follow the effect of these Amendments, and I think it a very reasonable suggestion that we should make these matters an object of study during the Easter Recess.

(3.50.) The House divided:—Ayes 125; Noes 52.—(Div. List, No. 103.)

Lords Amendments to Commons Amendments to Lords Amendments as far as Clause D, agreed to.

Lords Amendment to the Commons Amendment to Lords Amendment, Clause D, in the words inserted after "proceedings," leave out "nor in any case where no notice of opposition has been given," the next Amendment, read a second time.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."—(*Sir M. Hicks Beach.*)

(3.59.) MR. S. T. EVANS: I hope the House will give its most careful attention to this Amendment of the Lords. If it be agreed to, the effect will be that the Government will have broken the pledge they gave and receded from the promises they made both in Committee and on Report. It was agreed by the Government that in undefended cases there should be no solicitor's or witnesses' costs. The first proposal was to insert a Schedule in the Bill, and the Attorney General read out to us the Schedule he suggested. There were various Amendments on the Paper at the time, and we refrained from moving them on an undertaking being expressly given by the Attorney General not only that there should be rules, but that there should be a clause in the Act of Parliament containing the provision to which I refer. The undertaking was to insert a clause in another place. When the Bill got into another place, the Prime Minister proposed a clause with which I venture to agree. But afterwards the Standing Committee of the Lords altered the clause, I believe, on the legal authority of the Lord Chancellor. When the Bill came down again to this House the Government, of course, saw that the clause did not carry out their own pledges, and I had the honour of proposing the insertion of the words "nor in any case where no notice of opposition has been given." The Bill was sent again to another place with those words in the clause, and it comes back here with those words eliminated. We are forbidden to discuss the use of the Second Chamber on an Amendment of this kind; but, if this action of the Lords is to be acquiesced in, I presume that one of the uses of the Lords will be to enable the Government to get out of its pledges. I had better perhaps satisfy the House by reading the very words of the Attorney General when dealing with this matter. On the 10th of February in this House the Attorney General said; as reported in *Hansard* (1890-91, vol. ii., page 367):—

"There is no doubt as to the way in which costs in undefended cases ought to be dealt with, and the Government will take care that they shall be dealt with by rules of the Rule Committee. Under these rules the costs of employing a solicitor will not be allowed where no notice of defence has been given. If the tithe-payer admits that he owes the money, a rule that no costs shall be allowed beyond the fees will meet the objections that have been made. I say this with the authority of my right hon. Friend the President of the Board of Trade."

Later on in the same speech, the hon. and learned Gentleman said:—

"I hope that I have satisfied hon. Members that they are under a misapprehension, and that in undefended cases, the costs will be strictly limited by the rules which the Government will have framed."

Then I put a question to him; I said—

"It is not contended that in undefended cases, solicitors' and barristers' costs are not now incurred; but will the hon. and learned Gentleman undertake that in such cases there shall be no legal professional costs under this Act?"

Mr. S. T. Evans

The Attorney General replied as follows:—

"I am perfectly willing to undertake that the rules shall, in cases in which there is an admission of liability, prevent such costs being charged against the tithepayer."

The same night, or, rather, early the next morning, the Attorney General made a further statement. The *Hansard* report is starred, and, I presume, is acknowledged as correct by the Attorney General. [Sir R. WEBSTER was understood to dissent.] I always understood that the starring of a name in a report in *Hansard* meant that the speaker had read through the report and revised it.

SIR R. WEBSTER: Will the hon. Member pardon me? I have not in the whole of this Session corrected a single thing except a printer's error.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Then it is well the House should know in the future that the Attorney General is not to be held responsible for the reports of his speeches, although they are starred. At all events, he is reported to have said (Vol. 11., page 391)—

"The words of the rules which I have read are clear, that the costs of employing a solicitor will not be allowed in any case in which no notice of defence is entered, and in cases in which there is such notice they will only be allowed for work done subsequent to such notice. Again, witnesses' costs will not be allowed in any case where the tithepayer has not given notice of defence."

Then I said—

"I shall be glad if the Attorney General will agree to the incorporation of the rules in the Bill."

Sir M. Hicks Beach, in reply to that, said "It shall be done." My hon. Friend (Mr. Lloyd-George) said—

"Under these circumstances I do not propose to move the remaining Amendments on the Paper."

Now, here we have a distinct pledge, given by the Government for a *quid pro quo*, that in another place they would bring in a clause providing that in undefended cases there should be no costs.

SIR R. WEBSTER indicated assent.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Does the hon. and learned Gentleman say now that there are to be no costs in undefended cases?

SIR R. WEBSTER: In undefended cases, yes.

MR. S. T. EVANS: Then may I ask whether if the tithepayer files a notice admitting the claim there will be no costs?

SIR R. WEBSTER: There will be none in that case. I will explain when my hon. and learned Friend has finished his speech.

MR. S. T. EVANS: I am very sorry to contradict the hon. and learned Attorney General, but I contend that there will be costs in such cases. All the initial costs of an action must be incurred before the notice of action can be filed. I should like to see the Attorney General produce an Amendment carrying out the view that where no notice of opposition is filed there shall be no costs. I want to know what has happened in another place to make the Government depart from the pledge they gave us here, and I want to see inserted in the clause some words providing that where a case is undefended, and the tithepayer is entitled to his order to recover, there shall be no costs either of solicitor or witnesses. I think that unless this is done we shall be justified, even at this period of the Session, in carrying on the fight to the bitter end. The interference of the Lords has been entirely uncalled for, and appears to have been contrary to the wishes of the Government themselves. Are the Government to throw over their pledges in this way, and to tie themselves hand and foot to any ecclesiastical or sacerdotal supporter they may have in the Upper House? It was supposed that there was to be no more contentious business in connection with this matter this Session, and many hon. Members have in consequence gone away to their homes; but I can tell the Government that if they want to facilitate the working of this Act in the Principality, they had better throw over their ecclesiastical supporters and adhere to their pledges. Unless they do so it is clear that they are simply championing the cause of the clerical tithe owner; and, speaking with a full sense of my responsibility as a Member of this House, I say I think we shall be justified in resisting the smooth working of the Act in the Principality.

(4.15.) SIR R. WEBSTER: I do not intend to adopt the tone which my hon. and learned Friend has assumed in the attack he has just made upon the Government. No doubt it is a very convenient thing to be able to launch a Debate of this kind by alleging that there has been a breach of faith or a breach of arrangement. Having regard to what has passed between the Government and those who, in conjunction with my hon. and learned Friend, have been conducting the opposition to this Bill most fairly, I think the allegation my hon. and learned Friend has made was singularly uncalled for. I will leave the House to form their own judgment when they have heard the very brief statement I am going to make. I go back in no shape or form from the substance of what I have said. In undefended cases there will be no costs. The subsequent alterations made by the Lords make it impossible to adhere to the words as they originally stood. As the clause now stands there are three cases in which no costs can be claimed. The House will see how unjust it is to allege a breach of faith. Now the point is whether we have provided there should be no costs in undefended cases. In the first place, no costs, either for solicitor or witness, shall be claimed in any case where the amount claimed is paid without further proceeding. Secondly, no costs will be paid, in any case where notice of intention to apply for time to pay the tithe owner's claim has been given. Thirdly, in any case where notice of opposition has been given within the prescribed time the costs of solicitor will only be allowed for work done subsequent to that notice. I say most distinctly no costs will be allowed in really undefended cases. In addition to the three enactments which were inserted, these are the words that are now insisted on: "Nor in any case where no notice of opposition has been given." I appeal to any Member of this House to consider this matter fairly and impartially. Take this case: A receiver is appointed; objection is taken to the receiver receiving the rent, and it is necessary in consequence of the obstructive actions of the tithepayer for the tithe owner, through the receiver, to apply to the Court. Costs are thereby incurred. Can it be said that the tithepayer ought not to pay those costs? If the tithepayer could jump up in the County Court and say, "No notice of opposition has been given and therefore there is no jurisdiction to give costs," he would escape payment of the costs. Any real case of an undefended action is met by the clauses of the Bill. The only case which is not met is a case which ought not to be met. I am perfectly willing to take any amount of blame for not having seen the possible working of these words at the time they were accepted by the Government. It seems to me more frank to admit that I did not perceive the actual working of the clause as worded, than to take up any other line of argument. The omission of these words is in no way insisted on in consequence of any change of front or because of any breach of faith on the part of the Government; but because every single fair case is met by the words which have been expressly put into the Bill for that purpose. When hon. Members opposite come to deal with the question, I would ask them to point to any case in which the tithe owner can get costs when no opposition is made by the tithepayer. If the tithepayer pays the money, the tithe owner will not be allowed costs. If the tithepayer says, "I owe the money, but want you to let me pay it by instalments," the tithe owner will get no costs. Even in a case in which the tithepayer goes to the Court, and says, "I wish to appear in this matter on the question of amount," the tithe owner will get no costs. Under these circumstances, I appeal to any fair-minded man to say whether there is the slightest foundation for the suggestion that we have not carried out our pledge.

Mr. S. T. EVANS: Will the hon. and learned Gentleman read the Rules he read on the Report stage?

Sir R. WEBSTER: I am very sorry I have not got them here; but, as far as I know, they are in accordance with what I have stated to the House.

(4.27.) Mr. RANDELL (Glamorgan, Gower): It is difficult to see why the Government agreed to the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend, and now assent to what has been done by the House of Lords. I must say that the fact of the Government assenting to the course followed by the Lords will be received with much disfavour by the constituencies we represent. If any part of the Bill has been contested more strenuously than another, it has been that portion which relates to the question of costs. This House has been most anxious to keep down the costs. I venture to think that in cases in which there is a *bonâ fide* defence, the costs under this Bill will be much greater than they would be under the present law. The Amendment of my hon. Friend appeared to be so reasonable, the other evening, to the Government themselves that they accepted it, and I see no reason why they should depart from the position they then took up. We Welsh Members have, I think, fought this Bill very fairly and have succeeded in getting various Amendments inserted, but many of those Amendments have been struck out in the House of Lords. I do hope that in this case the Government will stick to their guns, and will refuse to assent to the Lords' Amendment.

(4.29.) Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): It really is very sad to think that after we have passed a Bill here and sent it to the Lords, and have then considered their Amendments and sent the measure up again with an agreement on both sides of the House in favour of certain alterations, the Lords should step in and strike out those alterations. The Attorney General says he defies any fair person to get up in this House, and say after his speech that the pledge given by the Government has been violated. Well, I am prepared to say that, as far as I understand the matter, after listening to what has fallen from my hon. Friend, and from the Attorney General, the pledge has been absolutely violated. I am strengthened in my belief on this point by the indignation shown by the Attorney General. I have always observed that when a lawyer shows indignation there is something concealed behind it. The omission of these words was moved by Lord Selborne. It appears to me that the Liberal Unionists are as troublesome in the House of Lords as they are in this House. Either these words mean something or they do not. If they mean nothing why do not the Government consent to their re-insertion? The Attorney General explained that they do mean something, and said he had been deceived—poor, innocent man!—by my hon. Friend, but Lord Selborne, being more acute than he, saw the serious harm they would do, and, therefore, they were struck out by the Lords. The fact is, that the Government want to get the Royal Assent to the Bill as soon as possible, and that is why they will not agree to re-insert the words. I ask the noble Lord the Member for Darwen (Viscount Cranborne) to be good enough to give his assent to our proposal, and to absolve the Government from the mandate he has issued that the Bill shall be passed in its entirety before the Easter Recess. We perfectly well know that the noble Lord is our master in this matter, and the master of the Government, and if he does not agree to our suggestion we shall be voted down. We protest against the conduct of the Government. If anything ought to be kept sacred it is a pledge given by the Government to the House, and more especially when for that pledge they have obtained a clear and distinct *quid pro quo.* The Attorney General went out of his way to praise the fairness of my hon. Friend (Mr. S. T. Evans), and my hon. Friend distinctly says that, as far as he understands it, there was a specific pledge, and that pledge has been violated. I would put it to the Government, therefore, whether, under these circumstances, and in view of the fact that the greater number of the Welsh Members have gone away relying on the pledge, it would not be better to disagree with the Amendment or to defer the Debate until after Easter.

(4.34.) Mr. J. E. ELLIS (Nottingham, Rushcliffe): It strikes me that the issue now before the House raises a very important question as to the value we are to place on the assurances that proceed from the Treasury Bench as to the manner in which business is to be conducted. I listened with very great attention to the speech of the hon. and learned Attorney General and it entirely failed to convince me that the Government have maintained in the House of Lords the attitude we had a right to expect from them in view of the assurances given in this House. This is not the first time this question has arisen during the continuance of the present Parliament. I remember perfectly well that on the Coal Mines Regulation Bill we had Amendments accepted in this House, and struck out in the other House by the Colleagues of those who had accepted them here. I do put it to the President of the Board of Trade (Sir M. Hicks Beach) that the Government should, as a matter of good faith, stand to their guns and agree to the re-insertion of the words they accepted in this House.

(4.36.) Sir G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): The hon. and learned Attorney General, in his very clear and interesting speech, showed that the Government have gone very far to meet the wishes of the Welsh Members, and I think he showed likewise that in his opinion they had gone as far as their pledges led them. I do not wonder, however, that the Welsh Members do not think that everthing promised them in previous Debates has been carried out, and I own I must join in that opinion. It appears to me to be a very small point. The Attorney General is reported to have said, in reply to the hon. and learned Member for Mid Glamorgan (Mr. S. Evans) on the 10th of February (*Hansard*, 1890-91, vol. II., page 367)—

> "There is no doubt as to the way in which costs in undefended cases ought to be dealt with, and the Government will take care that they shall be dealt with by rules of the Rule Committee. Under these rules the costs of employing a solicitor will not be allowed where no notice of defence has been given. If the tithepayer admits that he owes the money, a rule that no costs shall be allowed beyond the fees will meet the objections that have been made."

That has been done, undoubtedly. Later on, at page 391, the Attorney General says—

> "I think my undertaking ought to have been sufficient, for it is a most unusual practice to put, say, half a dozen rules on the face of an Act of Parliament. The words of the rules which I have read are clear, that the costs of employing a solicitor will not be allowed in any case in which no notice of defence is entered, and in cases in which there is such notice they will only be allowed for work done subsequent to such notice."

The only other words I will read to the House are the words of the clause moved in the House of Lords, presumably to carry out the intentions of the Government as expressed by the Attorney General—

"An application to a County Court for an order under this Act may be made on behalf of the tithe owner by his agent, although not a solicitor, and on such application the costs either of a solicitor or of a witness shall not be allowed in any case where notice of defence has not been given, and when such notice has been given the costs of a solicitor shall only be allowed for work done subsequent to the notice."

The Government have introduced a clause, and the House of Lords has accepted it, excusing the defendant from costs on two conditions, of which the first is that the costs either of the solicitor or witness shall not be allowed in any case where the amount claimed is paid without further proceedings. I suppose it is contended that that covers the case where no notice of defence is entered, and I can quite understand that the Attorney General considers that an immense concession. It does not cover, says my hon. and learned Friend below the Gangway, the case where the defendant assumes a purely passive attitude. There is a real difference between the Amendment as it comes down from the House of Lords and the Amendment as it left this House. The Attorney General has shown that it may be a very vexatious action on the part of the defendant, but that only bears out more strongly the contention of my hon. and learned Friend that a very definite and strong case is not met by the Amendment as it comes down from the Lords, but was met by the Amendment as it went to the Lords. I do not want to use strong expressions, and to say anything about a breach of faith, but I do say it is a most unfortunate thing that the other House should have thought it necessary to whittle down those concessions which made this Bill, not palatable, but tolerable, to the Welsh Members; and I further say that I do not see any public reason why we should not disagree to this Amendment, the only bad result of which would be that the Royal Assent to the Bill would be put off for a fortnight. I do not, however, think that that would be a very great evil.

*(4.46.) Mr. F. S. STEVENSON: The course the Government have taken on this Bill in accepting Amendments moved in the Lords by persons other than members of the Government is one which may be fraught with serious consequences.

Sir G. Trevelyan

*Sir M. HICKS BEACH: We had nothing to do with the fact that Lord Selborne moved this particular Amendment.

*Mr. F. S. STEVENSON: That strengthens my argument. By accepting this Amendment the Government made themselves responsible for it; and the question is whether they have shifted in any degree from the position taken up in a previous Debate. It seems to me that the contention of the Attorney General rests on the difference between opposition and notice of opposition. He admits that the acceptance of the Amendment was an afterthought, and that at the time he spoke in the House he did not contemplate the contingency the Amendment is designed to meet. The hon. and learned Gentleman must remember that he gave a pledge to the House and that a pledge depends not so much on the manner in which it is understood by the man who makes it as on the manner in which it is understood by those to whom it is made. The Welsh Members distinctly have a different impression of the pledge from that of the Attorney General. I appeal to the Government to consent to the disagreement on the part of the House to the Amendment.

*(4.48.) Mr. SYDNEY GEDGE: The pledge given by the Government was clear. It was that where there was no opposition there should be no costs, and that pledge is amply carried out without these words. Every one who understands the matter will see that without notice of opposition when the receiver is going to take possession, it is possible for the tithepayer to put difficulties in his way. The insertion of these words would enable him to do so without being liable to the costs which his wrongful action had caused.

(4.49.) Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I do not know if the hon. Gentleman was present when the pledge was given by the Attorney General. The whole thing would be settled if the hon. and learned Gentleman would only bring before the House the Rules he was drafting, and which he asked my hon. Friend to accept instead of this clause in the Bill. I remember the Divisions which took place on the Motions moved with the object of preserving the tithe as national property when it may be used for another purpose. I remember that a Motion was moved at about 1 o'clock in the morning, and I remember that an hon. Friend who moved it proposed that no costs of solicitor or witness should be given where there had been no notice of defence. The Attorney General accepted that and read the proposed Rules, and the Government adopted the words they are now asking us to drop out altogether. Although the Attorney General pledged himself to draw up rules as the hour was nearly 1 o'clock in the morning he did not move them, but said they would be inserted in the Bill "in another place." Since then he has probably discovered that although no notice of opposition on defence may be lodged, yet that by certain processes costs may be incurred. I understand that he now agrees that this should be dropped out of the Bill, though the clause has been twice adopted by the House. This is a very serious question. Several Amendments were dropped by my hon. Friends for Wales, which probably, but for the statement of the Government, would have occupied two or three hours in discussion. But the Attorney General is now going to vote contrary to the understanding at which he arrived with hon. Members on this side of the House. I think the only course he ought to take is to vote with us. Since he drafted these Rules, however, he has, I suppose, discovered that there were things he did not know of at the time. ["He has said so."] I have been here all the time, and I have not heard it. Supposing the Attorney General adopted the understanding with this side of the House under a misconception, then we are in this position, that he came to terms from which he now seeks to withdraw on the ground of misconception. I regret the Attorney General has not got his own Rules here, because they would have settled the question.

(4.54.) MR. PRITCHARD MORGAN (Merthyr Tydvil): Hon. Members from Wales who are not present could not have anticipated that the Government would take this action. I hold in my hand the Amendment to which the Commons agreed, "Nor in any case where no opposition has been given." The Attorney General now shields himself behind the allegations of innocence in this matter. There was an unmistakable pledge, so far as my memory goes, given by the Attorney General and by the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade. I am certain that every Representative of the Principality is under that impression. Now, at the very moment we are adjourning for a well-deserved holiday, we have this Bill sent back from the Lords with this slap in the face, as it were, to the House of Commons and to the Government. Having agreed with the House that certain words should be inserted, the Lords say "No, we will not agree to it, and we send it back to you again." This is a very serious matter indeed, and there may be a time come when the Government will have to answer to the constituencies for having broken their distinct and unmistakable pledge, while the Attorney General assumes the mien of the most innocent Member of the most innocent Government that has ever ruled in the country.

(4.58.) MR. JOICEY (Durham, Chester-le-Street): Sir, I was present when this bargain was made between the Attorney General as a Member of Her Majesty's Government and my hon. and learned Friend. I confess my reading of his words is that the Attorney General confesses that my hon. and learned Friend got the better of him. But, Sir, we commercial men have always been of the impression that a bargain is a bargain and ought to be adhered to, and that when one party has got the worst of it he has no right to attempt to upset that bargain. It is perfectly clear that the Amendment of my hon. and learned Friend was accepted without any qualification whatever. It went to the House of Lords, and the Prime Minister moved it. Then Lord Selborne moved an Amendment to it, and the Representatives of Her Majesty's Government in the other House accepted it, thus breaking the pledge given by the Government in this House. I think that is most unfair treatment. When the bargain was made every Welsh Member had a full opportunity of discussing it. Now their mouths are practically closed. I repeat that such treatment is unfair, and I shall certainly vote with my hon. and learned Friend.

(5.0.) MR. DILLWYN (Swansea, Town): I heard the whole of the Debate on the clause now under discussion. I was rather surprised when my hon. Friend laughed at the remark of my hon. Friend the Member for Merthyr, to the effect that he ought to vote for the Amendment. He ought to vote for it. I have no doubt on my mind that the understanding was clear and distinct that costs were not to be incurred in undefended cases, and I take an undefended case to mean where judgment is given without any defence having been offered. I also know that the whole of the Welsh Members believed the matter settled, and I am quite sure that the Attorney General would not wilfully commit any act of bad faith, though I am equally sure that it will be looked upon by Members on this side of the House as an act of bad faith. The Attorney General has altered the wording of our Amendment; but I think, before the point is decided, that we ought to have the Rule which the Attorney General was challenged to produce. I think the question ought not now to be settled, and I move that this Debate be now adjourned.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Debate be now adjourned."—(*Mr. Dillwyn.*)

(5.2.) MR. S. T. EVANS: I think we ought to have some reply from the Government before the Debate is adjourned. It seems to be admitted by the Attorney General that a pledge was given. To that the Attorney General assents. All he says is that in his mind there should be some very accurate distinction as to what is a defended and what an undefended case. I would reiterate the case cited by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Bridgeton Division of a man being passive.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order order! The Question is, the Adjournment of the Debate.

MR. S. T. EVANS: I think we ought to have the adjournment in order to get the Rules from the Attorney General, who has placed his recollection against ours in this matter. Why does he not produce the Rules, which, no doubt, are in some pigeon-hole of some office. Surely the Government ought themselves to assent to the Motion, seeing that the majority of Welsh Members who are interested in the matter have gone back to their constituents. They would never have left had they had the slightest thought that the pledge given was to be violated within 24 hours of its having been given. One hon. Member says he has only had the Amendments of the Lords for an hour or two. We ourselves only received them this morning. The Government ought really to carry out their pledge, and I hope the House will enable them to seize this opportunity now given them to carry it out at the last moment.

(5.4.) DR. CLARK: I wish to ask some Member of the Government, on the Question of the Adjournment, what they intend to do with respect to Orders on the Paper?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order! The Question is, the Adjournment of the Debate.

*(5.4.) SIR J. SWINBURNE: We have had a good deal of hair-splitting on this matter, but really Her Majesty's Government come down here and say, "Here is an Order from the House of Lords." I repudiate that altogether.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

Sir M. HICKS BEACH rose in his place, and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

Question put, "That the Question be now put."

(5.5.) The House divided:—Ayes 143; Noes 57.—(Div. List, No. 104.)

Question put accordingly, "That the Debate be now adjourned."

(5.15.) The House divided:—Ayes 58; Noes 146.—(Div. List, No. 105.)

Sir M. HICKS BEACH claimed, "That the Original Question be now put."

Original Question put accordingly, "That this House doth agree with the Lords in the said Amendment."

(5.25.) The House divided:—Ayes 148; Noes 60.—(Div. List, No. 106.)

ELECTORAL DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 182.)

Considered in Committee.

*(5.34.) MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to move to report Progress. I protest against Progress being made with this Bill at the fag-end of the Sitting in the absence of hon. Members

who take an interest in it. We know that the measure is a very incomplete one, and that the electoral disabilities of the ordinary working man are left untouched. It is merely a legislative tinkering with the Registration Laws, and it is proposed in the interests of the Government supporters, who for some reason think that the soldiers, sailors, police, and coachmen, to whom this Bill specially applies, will vote for them. I protest against this measure being taken this afternoon, and I hope the Government will not press it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Causton.)*

*(5.36.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): The hon. Member appeals to me to support him in an obstructive course.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Order, order!

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I repeat the words, and I refuse to agree to the obstructive Motion of the hon. Member. The hon. Member is aware that there was a Parliamentary understanding last evening that we should get the Speaker out of the Chair on the Civil Service Estimates. That understanding has failed, and under the circumstances I am justified in asking the House to proceed with a Bill against the principle of which there has been no Division. I hope right hon. Gentlemen opposite will assist me in endeavouring to carry forward the business of the House.

*(5.38.) MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I think there has been some little misunderstanding. I was not aware the Government were going to put off Supply. I hope that even now it is not too late to get the Speaker out of the Chair. There was a distinct understanding that the Speaker was to leave the Chair on the Civil Service Estimates before moving the Adjournment. If that had been done I had intended to ask the Government not to proceed with this and the Savings Bank Bill. Let us deal with this question as sensible businesslike men. No one wishes to prolong this Sitting; we all want to get away. The right Gentleman met us in a spirit of the greatest fairness last night in regard to the Scotch Private Bill Committee, and my right hon. Friend the Member for Mid Lothian agreed that facilities should be given for carrying on other business of the Government, but at half-past 11 the House had to deal with a question of great public interest with reference to the management of the Post Office, and no one can say half an hour was too long to devote to that. Still, I believe there was a distinct understanding that to-day no opposition would be raised to the Speaker leaving the Chair. I would render every facility to carry such a Motion upon the understanding that the adjournment of the House was then moved.

*(5.41.) MR. W. H. SMITH: I am afraid that it is impossible to go back upon the Order of the House postponing Supply until next Monday week. I may say that I received communications which satisfied me that we could not have got the Speaker out of the Chair this evening without the Closure. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] The House is in the habit of accepting statements which I make. I decline to waste the time between now and 10 minutes to 7, and I have to ask the House to consider what are practically two uncontested Bills.

(5.42.) SIR G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I do not want to use strong language, but I think it is rather unfortunate that not a single word was said in the course of the last hour or two as to the intentions of the Government, and for this reason, that we on this Bench were prepared, directly the Motion was made that the Speaker should leave the Chair, to have risen and assured the Government that we would do all in our power to allow the Motion to be carried in time for the Motion for the Adjournment to be moved afterwards. I took a good deal of trouble to ascertain who intended to speak on the Motion "That the Speaker do leave the Chair," and I believe I absolutely ascertained that they were willing to enter into that course to the fullest measure. If the Order of the Day for the Speaker leaving the Chair had been disposed of I would have been disposed to ask the Government whether they would consent, under the circumstances, not to proceed with the two Bills next on the Paper, which are Bills upon which there is considerable difference of opinion.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): May I point out that there is only one set of Amendments to this Bill, standing in the name of the hon. Member for Camborne, and that there cannot be any lengthened discussion upon it? The hon. Member himself appealed to the House last night to allow the Bill to be taken after 12 o'clock. It is important that the Bill should be passed at an early period of the Session.

MR. LABOUCHERE: The hon. Member for Caithness had intended to raise an important question on the Motion "That the Speaker do leave the Chair." I represented to him that perhaps it would be desirable if he deferred the matter, as it was to the interest of all Members that they should get away as soon as possible. The hon. Gentleman consented to defer the question. Other hon. Members gave up their right to speak on the Motion, under the impression that there was some sort of understanding that if they did Mr. Speaker would leave the Chair, and the Motion for Adjournment would be moved. As to this Order, the Amendment of the hon. Member for Camborne goes to the root of the Bill, and the hon. Member will not be left to discuss it himself, as there are many Members who share his views. Under these circumstances, I do not think it is probable that the Bill will pass before 10 minutes to 7 o'clock. There is no desire, when the House meets after the Recess, to discuss the Motion "That the Speaker leave the Chair," and I and my hon. Friends will be prepared to consider the Estimates at once on Monday week. I would suggest that, on the understanding that there is no discussion on Monday week on the Motion "That the Speaker leave the Chair," the First Lord of the Treasury should now move the adjournment. I certainly think he would gain by accepting such a proposal.

(5.48.) MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): There is considerable opposition to this Bill on its merits, and although I was personally willing and anxious to take the Bill last night there can be no question of obstruction if discussion is raised. The First Lord of the Treasury has said there are two uncontested Bills. I presume that one to which he refers is the Savings Banks Bill. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that that is not an uncontested Bill. I have received instructions from my constituents to oppose that measure unless a concession is made on a point which the savings banks consider of vital importance.

MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): If there is one person to blame for the difficulty in which we are in at the present time it is the First Lord of the Treasury. The difficulty arises through the second Order of the Day being passed over. In giving up their right to speak on that Order hon. Members were not desirous that the Electoral Disabilities Bill and the Savings Banks Bill should be pushed forward this afternoon. The Bill now under consideration is one which none of us like—indeed we regard it as a paltry measure dealing with a great subject. Even if we dispose of it, it will be impossible to get the Savings Banks Bill through this afternoon, as there are several important points which must necessarily be discussed.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): If the right hon. Gentleman expects to get through these two Bills this afternoon he is very much mistaken. There will be much discussion upon the proposal to omit an important clause of the Savings Banks Bill.

*MR. TOMLINSON (Preston): I rise to order. Is it in Order for the hon. Gentleman, on a Motion to report Progress on this Bill, to discuss the provisions of the Savings Banks Bill?

THE CHAIRMAN: The hon. Gentleman is out of order.

*MR. H. H. FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): It is quite evident we cannot get through the two Bills and dispose of the Motion for Adjournment this afternoon. I would therefore support the suggestion of the hon. Member for Northampton, namely, that we should come to an understanding that the Speaker should leave the Chair without discussion on Monday the 6th of April, and that the Government should now move the adjournment for the holidays.

DR. CLARK: I might have been willing to allow the Speaker to leave the Chair at an earlier hour, but now I cannot consent to such an understanding, because if the adjournment were moved now, there would be no time to say anything on the Motion.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: If there is a distinct Parliamentary understanding which will be observed by hon. Gentlemen above and below the Gangway opposite, that the Speaker do leave the Chair on the Order being called on Monday week, I will accept the suggestion of the right hon. Gentleman.

SIR G. TREVELYAN: I think the right hon. Gentleman has met us in a fair manner, and I shall consider it my duty to be here first thing on Monday the 6th, and bear testimony, if it is needed, to the understanding.

DR. CLARK: I do not agree to it.

*MR. W. H. SMITH: Am I to understand there is an hon. Gentleman who dissents from the agreement? If so it is impossible to carry on business.

DR. CLARK: On the understanding that I may speak on the point I desire to raise when the Adjournment is moved, I agree to the understanding.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday, 6th April.

MOTION.

ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE (EASTER.)

(6.0.) Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That this House at the conclusion of the morning sitting do adjourn till Thursday at 12 of the clock; that on Thursday the House at its rising do adjourn till Monday, April 6; and that Mr. Speaker, as soon as he has reported the Royal Assent to the Bills agreed on by both Houses, do adjourn the House without question put."—(*Mr. W. H. Smith.*)

DR. CLARK: In Committee of Supply for several years I have called attention to the very inadequate grants given to Scotland for various purposes, as compared with those given to England and Ireland. Our position in Scotland is very peculiar. At the present time Scotland, partly owing to the industry of its people, and partly owing to the fact that the people drink a very highly taxed article, is paying about 2s. more per head of the population in taxation than England. We have to congratulate ourselves upon the one cause, but to deplore the other. Scotland has no Government dockyards, although we could build ships about 50 per cent. cheaper than you can build them in your dockyards, and in about half the time. We have no arsenals or military camps. The only respect in which we might be fairly tested would be in the Civil Service Estimates; we might get our fair share of the money voted by Parliament for special purposes, but, as a matter of fact, we do not. You sometimes say that Scotland is a poor country and it is not necessary to pay as high salaries there as are paid in England or Ireland. That is not correct. Scotland is richer than England, because she pays more per head in taxation, and the cost of living in large towns in Scotland is much the same as in England. Certainly it is higher than in Ireland. Let us take, first of all, the salaries paid to the principal Secretaries of State. The Home Secretary is paid £5,000 a year; the Chief Secretary for Ireland £4,425; and the Secretary for Scotland £2,000. The Under Secretaries are paid in the same fashion. In England the Under Secretary gets £2,000, and in Scotland £1,500 a year. The principal clerks in England are paid from £900 to £1,000 a year; in Ireland from £700 to £900; and in Scotland from £300 to £400. The same principle is even carried out in the Scotch Office in London; for, instead of getting £900 or £1,000 a year, which English clerks get, the clerks in the Scotch Office at Whitehall only get from £450 to £600. The English Attorney General is paid £7,000; the Irish Attorney General £5,000; while the Lord Advocate only receives £2,300. The English Solicitor General receives £6,000; the Irish Solicitor General £2,000; and the Scotch Solicitor General only £900. I want to know on what ground this great disparity can be supported. Again, the cost of Local Government in England is £166,000; in Ireland £133,000; and in Scotland only £9,806. Take one Department alone — the Medical Department, by which the Public Health Acts are carried out: the cost in England is £17,416; in Ireland £4,400; and in Scotland £500. The result is, you have not the same attention paid to public health matters as you have in England and in Ireland, and a great deal of preventible disease occurs from the parsimony of this House in reference to everything Scotch. We are badly used in other directions in this matter of salaries; where prison officials in England and in Ireland receive £2,000, in Scotland they are paid only £1,200. The same thing occurs in the Lunacy Commission. Here Commissioners receive £1,500 a year, in Scotland, where there happen to be two very able men, they are paid £1,000. And so you may carry the comparison down through the grades of assistant officials where you find in England they are paid the salaries which in Scotland are paid to the principal officers. In the case of chaplains to prisons the same thing obtains. Although I am not specially in favour of the endowment of religion by State officials of this kind, I may point out that while you pay these clergymen in England £350 to £450 a year, in Scotland you give them from £200 to £300. Then I have a much more serious grievance to complain of. So far as officials are concerned, there might be uniformity produced by reducing all pay to the Scotch level thus saving a good deal of money, and this is probably what I will attempt to do in Committee of Supply. But in the grants in aid, I am sorry to say Scotland is treated in the same shabby manner. These are the Royal Colleges of Science for the teaching of technology applied to various industries, and you vote sums in aid for England and Ireland. You have a very valuable school in London and every year £16,000 is voted by Parliament for teachers and scholarships, under which young English lads can be educated free by the State and unfairly compete with Scotch lads. We get nothing of the kind. There is a sum in the present year on the Vote of £16,895 for teachers and scholarships in London, and £3,800 additional for museums, making over £20,000 for technical education in London. You have a similar thing in Ireland, £7,000 for technology and scholarship for Irish lads; but you refuse to vote a single penny to Scotland in this direction. The only item upon which Scotland gets a higher vote than England and Ireland is in the competition open to all in the Science and Art Department. There the figures are £16,000 for England, £20,000 for Scotland and £8,000 for Ireland; but this is not direct State aid, it is obtained by the ordinary method. Where assistance is given to Colleges of Science in England, we find that to the Watt College in Edinburgh for Engineers, there is no assistance given, and though in one year there was a grant to a college in Dundee that has now been stopped. One of the conditions of the Union between Scotland and England was that the Scotch Church and Scotch Universities should be maintained by the State. The year before last the Chancellor of the Exchequer pushed a Bill through the House, under which an obligation was undertaken by the Government to the extent of £40,000 for Scotch Universities. We voted against it, and we still maintain that under the Articles of Union, Great Britain is liable for the maintenance. Now, what has occurred? The Commission appointed have told you the sum is inadequate, and they cannot perform the duties they were appointed to carry out. The Treasury refuse to do anything, even though bound by the solemn Articles of Union. You refuse to carry out your obligations, and your payments you are compelled to make are at the rate of two centuries ago, when the value of money was wholly different to what it is now. In all these grants Ireland gets all she wants, and much more than she ought to get, while Scotland gets nothing. I may point out that while the Royal Society in London gets £4,000, and the Royal Institute in Ireland £2,000, the Royal Society in Edinburgh gets £300, and that £300 goes back again in the form of rent. In England and Ireland there are grants for the Royal Society, the Royal Geographical Society, the Royal Academy of Music, the Royal College of Music, the Royal Irish Academy, the Hibernian Society, and other institutions. In Scotland there is nothing of the kind. In addition to this, there is the distinction that what is in Scotland paid entirely out of local rates is in England and Ireland paid from the Imperial Exchequer; so that while you compel Scotland to pay for Scotch institutions for local purposes, you also require Scotland to share in the burden of supporting English and Irish institutions. In this same Vote there is the payment for auditors to examine Local Government accounts. That is a loss of £28,000, and a growing loss, because you are going to supply the same thing to County Councils. You have got registrars, but the cost of registration in Scotland is defrayed out of local rates, while in England the cost is partly defrayed by Imperial Grants, to which Scotland pays her share. Look at the grand total of grants in and from Imperial resources—for England about £1,000,000, for Scotland about £230,000, for Ireland over £2,000,000. These are very serious grievances. We are compelled to pay more per head of Imperial taxation in Scotland, while we have to tax ourselves for our Scotch institutions. Grants in aid are freely given in England and Ireland for public health purposes, for education, for art and science, while such grants are refused to Scotland. I frankly admit that Scotch Members are greatly to blame for this. They have always been in favour of economy and retrenchment, and now you have applied economy and retrenchment against Scotland. The Irish Members have always pursued a different policy, and have been equally successful. They have endeavoured to secure every possible benefit to their country from the relationship between the countries. When, as I hope, these relations as regards both Ireland and Scotland are modified, there will, I trust, be a more equal distribution of burdens; but, meanwhile, while Ireland gets all the financial benefit of the Union, and scarcely any of the burden, and while England gets about an equal share of the burden and the benefit, Scotland comes in for more than her share of the burden and none of the benefit. Two years ago a Committee was appointed for the examination of these questions. That Committee sat for a day last Session; and, I suppose, will meet again when the Chancellor of the Exchequer is relieved from the pressure of his Budget arrangements. When that Committee has finished its work, I trust that the result will be something more than the Treasury answer that these things are done under Acts of Parliament; that charges are met in Scotland from local rates, but elsewhere from Imperial resources. Such Acts must be repealed when they press unfairly against one member in the partnership. This is the demand we shall have to make when the Committee presents its Report. A fairly proportioned sum must be handed over to each country for local purposes, and then we shall be able to carry out long desired reforms, and the exploitation of Scotland for the benefit of England will cease. This is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and I hope that a new and fair principle will be applied equally throughout the three countries. I hope the benefits and the burdens will be shared equally by the three parties.

*(6.20.) MR. S. SMITH (Flintshire): I desire to say a word or two in regard to an Indian grievance, and I avail myself of the opportunity at this late hour, because if the matter is delayed until the Easter holidays are over, it will be too late to remedy the evil complained of. The matter was dealt with in a question I put down on the Paper for today, but it was not possible to ask that question. I desire to call the attention of the hon. or right hon. Gentleman opposite who represents the Government of India at this moment, to an Indian grievance. It springs out of what is called the Abkari system. Two years ago we passed a Resolution against that system, and the result of that Resolution was that the Government of India adopted certain improvements in the administration of the law in this regard. The improvements were given effect to in a Minute the Government issued about a year ago, and one of the points in that Minute was this: it was set forth that the sites of the liquor shops should, as far as possible, be at a distance from market places, schools, hospitals, places of worship, factories, and places of public resort. The reason of this decision was that great complaints were made all over India of the Government planting liquor shops close to factories, churches, and schools with the view of inducing people to enter them. Great demoralisation was caused by this practice of placing inducements in the way of people to indulge in liquor. In consequence of the representations made to them, the Government issued the Minute of which I have spoken, requiring the collectors to ascertain the public opinion as much as possible before planting the liquor shops. It required them to exercise a kind of local option in the matter. A great grievance has just been caused in the town of Madura, which is situated a short distance from Madras. Seventeen liquor shops were advertised to be opened in most objectionable

localities—close to temples, schools, and so on. They were to be opened in the spring of this year. A Petition was got up, and signed by all the most respectable residents in the locality, with a view to inducing the collector to remove the shops. What do you suppose was the answer given to the Petition? First it was said that it could not be attended to because it was not stamped; and, secondly, because there was not time to refer the matter to the highest authorities before the sale of the liquor shops was completed. And yet two months had to elapse before the liquor shops were sold, and Madura was only a day's post from Madras which centre, as a matter of fact, could have been communicated with by telegraph immediately. This was done, as a matter of fact, to choke off opposition and nullify the effect of the Government Minute. I think this attempt to nullify a decision of the Government is a thing at which the House should express the utmost indignation. A point to which I would call special attention is this: I wish the Government to send out to India an inquiry to ascertain why it was that this Petition was so contemptuously dismissed, and why it is that the wish of the people of the locality has not been given effect to according to provisions in the Minute of the Government of India issued last year. I can supply the Representative of the Government of India with full information on this subject. I do not expect to get a detailed reply, as it is impossible in the absence of the right hon. Gentleman who represents the Government of India in this House; but I ask that what is considered a great grievance in India shall be promptly stopped. All that is required is that the Madras Government should be communicated with, and that it should be pointed out that due attention should be paid to the wishes of the people, and that liquor shops should not be forced upon them against their wish.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): I am very sorry that through having been detained at the Foreign Office I was not able to be in my place this afternoon to answer the question of the hon. Member on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State for India. But, as I wrote, the hon. Member the Secretary of State for India has no official knowledge of the circumstances, as to which he wishes for official information. The Secretary of State, however, undertakes to write to Madras as to the nature of the orders given and as to the facts to which the hon. Member alludes. That, I apprehend, is all the hon. Member asks for.

(6.29.) SIR J. COLOMB (Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.): I wish to ask the First Lord of the Admiralty whether there is any truth in the current report that it is in contemplation to abolish the training squadron, and whether he can give the House an assurance that before any such step is taken the opinion of naval officers on the subject will be ascertained, and due weight will be given to their views?

*(6.30.) THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): It is in contemplation to abolish the training squadron, but the opinion of naval officers on the subject will be taken.

(6.31.) MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Mayo, S.): I am sorry I do not at this moment see the Chief Secretary for Ireland in his place, as I am anxious to know what he proposes to do in regard to an urgent matter to which I called his attention by letter yesterday. Perhaps the Secretary to the Treasury will be good enough to call his attention to the matter. I refer to the supply of potato seed to agricultural labourers in certain places in Ireland, and certainly in the Union of Phillipstown, County Mayo. The Guardians there are anxious to supply potato seed to their labourers, but according to the Act it cannot be supplied sooner than the month of May, when it will be too late to be of use. I should like this matter to be brought under the notice of the Chief Secretary so that some means may be adopted for enabling the Guardians to supply seed potatoes to a very deserving class of people. No doubt this necessity is not limited to the Phillipstown Union but extends also to other Unions. The seed time is drawing to an end and the matter is becoming urgent.

(6.33.) The SECRETARY to the TREASURY (Mr. Jackson, Leeds, N.): The Committee dealing with the financial relations of the three countries will have before it not only all the questions which the hon. Member for Caithness has mentioned, but many others besides. The hon. Member may rely upon the Representatives of Scotland on that Committee seeing that full justice is done to Scotland in eliciting all the information necessary and clearing up any doubts. As I have said before, I do not think it is possible to compare like with like, but I have had taken out for me a few figures with a view of testing, at any rate in a general way, the proportions as between Scotland and England, referred to by the hon. Member. Comparing the cost with the population, I find that the population of Scotland is about one-seventh that of England, and that as regards education and the salaries of the administrative staff the ratio of expenditure of Scotland to England is about 1 to 5½. The expenditure connected with inspection work is about 1 to 4——

Dr. CLARK: I frankly admit that so far as education in Scotland is concerned, where she gains—her results being higher—she gets more money. If we get more money in that respect we earn it.

Mr. JACKSON: That is not the point at all. I am dealing with the salaries of the administrative Staff, and I admit the point the hon. Member now makes. The proportion of expense in connection with lunacy boards is as 1 to 3; paupers and Local Government Board, 1 to 9; prisons, 1 to 4; and registration, 1 to 5. Taking the special expenditure in the two countries on the work of registration the figures work out remarkably alike: In England the cost per head of the population is ·3475 of a penny, and in Scotland it is ·3484. The figure is slightly higher in the case of Scotland. As to the other Departments to which I have referred it will be seen that, except as regards paupers and local government on which the expenditure for England is rather higher, relatively, than in Scotland, the expenditure for Scotland is higher than that for England. But I am quite sure the question will be most thoroughly threshed out in the Committee. The figures I have given go to confirm previous Estimates which I have submitted to the House; very important Papers will be submitted to the Committee on its first meeting after the holidays, and I think it will be able to renew its labours with a prospect of doing very good work. As to the seed supply in Ireland, I promise to call the attention of the Chief Secretary to the point which has been raised by the hon. Member for South Mayo.

Question put, and agreed to.

Resolved, That this House at the conclusion of the Morning Sitting this day do adjourn till Thursday at Twelve of the clock; that upon Thursday the House at its rising do adjourn till Monday, 6th April, and that Mr. Speaker, as soon as he has reported the Royal Assent to the Bills agreed on by both Houses, do adjourn the House without Question put.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

MAIL SHIPS BILL.—(No. 163.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 4.

Dr. CLARK (Caithness): I understood that an arrangement had been come to under which no business was to be taken after the Motion for Adjournment. We have already had a discussion on these understandings, and I should like to know whether the Government intend to carry out the understanding they came to with the House on this matter?

The UNDER SECRETARY of STATE for FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. Fergusson, Manchester, N.E.): The Bill now before the Committee is, I assure the hon. Gentleman, a matter of urgency, as it is necessary to give effect to the Postal Convention entered into with the French Government. The question is one that has been the subject of careful consideration, and I hope there will be no opposition to the Bill passing through the present stage.

Mr. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I would point out to the hon. Baronet that it was fully understood that no business would be taken after the Motion for Adjournment over the Easter holidays. If the Government had regarded this Bill as important they should have put it in front of that Motion, and I say that the fact of its being placed after the

Motion for Adjournment clearly shows that the Government did not think it was of the urgent nature stated by the right hon. Baronet. Personally, I have no objection to the Bill, but there may be a number of hon. Members who would have wished to discuss it had they known it was to come on; and, therefore, I will move that the Chairman report Progress, and ask leave to sit again.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. RITCHIE, Tower Hamlets, St. George's): It is quite clear that the Government are not justified in pressing the Bill forward if there is any objection to that course. We should not have proceeded with it had we not believed that it was entirely unopposed; but, under the circumstances, we shall consent to Progress being reported.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday, 6th April.

MERCHANDISE MARKS PROSECUTIONS [COSTS].

Committee to consider of authorising the payment of the costs of prosecutions undertaken by the Board of Trade, which may be incurred under any Act of the present Session to amend "The Merchandise Marks Act, 1887" (Queen's Recommendation signified), upon Monday, 6th April.

CUSTOMS (OUT-DOOR DEPARTMENT).

Copy ordered—

"Of Treasury Minute dated March, 1891, relative to an Inquiry by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Financial Secretary into the administration of the Out-door Department of the Customs."—(*The Chancellor of the Exchequer.*)

Copy presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 161.]

House adjourned at a quarter before Seven o'clock till Thursday.

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HOUSE OF LORDS,

Thursday, 26th March, 1891.

COMMISSION.

The following Bills received the Royal Assent:—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1).
2. Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act, 1890, Amendment.
3. Army (Annual).
4. Custody of Children.
5. Technical Instruction.
6. Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Ordered, That the Evening Sitting of the House on Tuesday, the 14th of April next, do commence at a quarter past Four o'clock.

House adjourned at a quarter past Twelve o'clock, to Tuesday, the 14th of April next, a quarter before Eleven o'clock.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Thursday, 26th March, 1891.

The House met at Twelve of the clock.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,—Pollen Fisheries (Ireland) Bill, with Amendments.

ROYAL ASSENTS.

Message to attend the Lords Commissioners;—

The House went;—and being returned;—

Mr. SPEAKER reported the Royal Assent to,—

1. Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Act, 1891.
2. Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act, 1891.
3. Army (Annual) Act, 1891.
4. Custody of Children Act, 1891.
5. Technical Instruction Act, 1891.
6. Tithe Act, 1891.

Whereupon, in pursuance of the Order of the House, of Tuesday, 24th March Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House without Question put.

House adjourned at twenty minutes after Twelve o'clock, till Monday, 6th April.

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

Monday, 6th April, 1891.

QUESTIONS.

ACCIDENT AT WOOLWICH ARSENAL.

MR. CAUSTON (Southwark, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the claim of Mr. F. Davey for damage done to his horse and van at Woolwich Arsenal in November last through being run into by steam engine No. 3 whilst employed in carrying iron to No. 1 repairing store; and whether it is true that compensation has been refused to Mr. Davey; and, if so, on what ground?

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. E. STANHOPE, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): The collision occurred through a van having been left unattended in an improper place. So far from admitting the carrier's claim to compensation, the Department considers that he ought to make good the damage done to the railway carriage.

REGULATION OF LICENSED HOUSES.

MR. O. V. MORGAN (Battersea): I beg to ask the Attorney General whether the Licensing Magistrates in the Metropolis have power to regulate the hours at which licensed houses shall be opened and closed; and whether they can decline to renew licences unless the holders of same agree to the hours proposed by the Magistrates?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir R. WEBSTER, Isle of Wight): Yes, Sir. Except in the case of occasional licences where the Magistrates have no discretion. The hours are fixed by Act of Parliament.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

MR. MORTON (Peterborough): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether with regard to buying out the French Treaty rights on the West Coast of Newfoundland any communication, either in writing or verbally, has been received from the French Government with regard to our occupation of Egypt?

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. W. H. SMITH, Strand, Westminster): No, Sir.

THE LABOUR COMMISSION.

MR. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): I beg to ask when the names of the Labour Commissioners will be announced, together with the terms of Reference?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope to make a statement as to the formation of the Labour Commission during the course of this week. But it is first of all necessary to submit all the Papers to Her Majesty, and that will cause some delay.

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): Is it true, as stated in the newspapers, that Mr. Davitt's name has been refused by Her Majesty's Government?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: It is not usual to make a statement with regard to any particular name until it is possible to make a complete statement to the House.

LAND PURCHASE (IRELAND) BILL.

MR. LEA (Londonderry, S.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury when the Land Purchase Bill will be taken?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I hope we shall be able to reach it by an early hour on Thursday.

In reply to Mr. J. MORLEY (Newcastle-upon-Tyne),

*MR. W. H. SMITH said: We shall, according to arrangement, take the appointment of the Scotch Committee on Thursday, and it was the universal understanding arrived at just before the Recess that that business would not occupy more than an hour and a half. [Sir G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): No, no.] Therefore, I hope we shall reach the Committee on the Land Purchase Bill by 6 o'clock. In any case we shall proceed with the Bill.

MR. LEA: Will the Land Purchase Bill be the second Order of the Day for Thursday?

*MR. W. H. SMITH: I am obliged, owing to the operation of the 12 o'clock Rule, to ask the House occasionally to consider Bills of comparatively little importance first. In this instance

I cannot undertake that the Land Purchase Bill will be the second Order, but it will be substantially.

MANIPUR.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the representative of the India Office whether he can give the House any further information with regard to the disaster at Manipur? Are we to understand that the Sepoys have reached their destination in safety as well as the British force?

*The UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): Thinking it probable that a question might be asked I inquired at the India Office, and was informed that all the information possessed by the Secretary of State on this subject had been forwarded to the newspapers, consequently I am not able to add anything. If, however, the House wishes to know anything as to the cause of the affair I can give it, but only in a brief form.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Then I will ask the right hon. Gentleman to state all the information he is prepared to give.

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: I may say, very shortly, that the affair at Manipur was caused entirely by domestic differences between the Maharajah and his brother, and the former, being alarmed for his safety, took refuge in the Residency. He subsequently abdicated, and retired from the territory of the State, leaving affairs in a condition in which they could not be allowed by the Government of India to allow them to remain. Accordingly, the Commissioner of Assam went up to take the necessary measures, and met with resistance from the brother of the Maharajah, who was the commander of the troops, which led to a deplorable reverse and loss of life. Of course, active measures have been taken to restore order and to place the Government of the State on a secure footing. A Despatch from the Government of India has been received on the subject, and will shortly be laid on the Table.

THE TOKAR EXPEDITION.

*THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I wish to correct an answer which I gave to the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) before the Recess. The hon. Member asked whether Her Majesty's ships in the Red Sea had conveyed any troops or stores for the Tokar Expedition. I answered in the negative in accordance with the information which had been supplied to me. But during the Recess I have received a letter from the Commander-in-Chief, from which it appears that two small vessels were engaged in the conveyance of Egyptian troops and stores.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): Will the Egyptian Government pay for these services?

*LORD G. HAMILTON: The cost will be very slight, and we do not propose to make any claim on the Egyptian Government.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Under what Estimate will this trifle appear? My own impression is that it has been already voted.

*LORD G. HAMILTON: It will appear in the Expenditure of last year.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Then I beg to give notice that I shall be under the painful necessity of moving a reduction in the noble Lord's salary.

SAVINGS BANKS BILL.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): Will the Savings Banks Bill be taken to-night?

MR. W. H. SMITH: No, Sir.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

SUPPLY.

Order for Committee read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Main Question [23rd March], "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair."

Question put, and agreed to.

SUPPLY—considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1891-92.

CLASS I.

1. Motion made, and Question proposed,

> "That a sum, not exceeding £30,710, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1892, for Expenditure in respect of Royal Palaces and Marlborough House."

(3.40.) Mr. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I have given notice of my intention to move the reduction of this Vote by the sum of £1,000 in connection with Kensington Palace. Kensington Palace is a perfect white elephant; it is of no use to anybody. It was suggested some time ago that it should be converted into a species of National Gallery for the exhibition of modern pictures. At any rate, there is no necessity for keeping it up in its present condition, certain rooms being set apart in it for members of the Royal Family. When we took over the Royal Palaces, it is said that we were supposed to engage to keep them in order; but this particular palace is perfectly useless, and its sanitary condition is such that we ought to insist on its being pulled down altogether. Nevertheless, we are required to spend £2,000 or £3,000 a year upon its maintenance, and in providing it with fuel, &c. This year the sum asked for is £2,561, and last year £2,750 was expended upon it, so that on the average it costs more than £2,500 per annum, and there is not the slightest need for keeping it up. No one in London wants it, and Kensington Gardens would be better without it. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £1,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £29,710 (reduced in respect of Kensington Palace), be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

*(3.44.) The FIRST COMMISSIONER of WORKS (Mr. Plunket, Dublin University): This is not the first time that the hon. Member for Northampton (Mr. Labouchere) has made an attack upon the maintenance of the Royal Palaces. He has done so every year during the present Parliament, but I am bound to say that on this occasion he has dealt much more kindly with the Vote than on former occasions. He has confined his opposition to a declaration that Kensington Palace ought to be removed altogether from the face of the earth on the ground that it is of no use, and that it disfigures Kensington Gardens. My answer to the statement of the hon. Gentleman is that the nation has taken over these palaces, and that we are under an obligation to maintain them in proper order. As to whether the Palace does disfigure the Gardens, there may, perhaps, be something to be said on both sides; but, as a matter of fact, we have no power to pull down Kensington Palace. It was proposed at one time to pull down one of the smaller of the Royal houses, and the question was submitted to the Law Officers of the Crown, who advised that no such power existed. The other ground of the opposition of the hon. Member is that this is an old house, and that it is in a dreadful insanitary condition. Two years ago it was not in a proper state, but considerable expense has since been incurred upon the drainage of Kensington Palace, and its sanitary condition has been very much improved. During last year a sum of £800 was expended upon the palace, and £750 of it came under the head of works for putting the palace in a better sanitary state. I am glad to say that it is now in a fairly good sanitary condition.

(3.47.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I cannot help remarking that whenever any proposal based upon common sense is made we are always told that we are under a contract to maintain these ricketty buildings. With whom did we enter into a contract? We entered into it with ourselves, and it seems absurd to hear a Minister practically admit, year after year, the necessity of getting out of the contract, and yet advise Parliament to go on spending this money.

*Mr. PLUNKET: No.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: The right hon. Gentleman says that he has consulted the Law Officers of the Crown as to the power of the Government to pull these buildings down.

*Mr. PLUNKET: The hon. Gentleman is in error. It was a good many years ago—some 30 years, I think—that the Law Officers of the Crown were consulted in reference to the power to pull down a portion of one of these buildings.

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Then 30 years ago we had an intelligent Minister of Public Works who did consider it unadvisable to go on wasting the public money, and because the Government were advised that they could not exercise the power as a right we have gone on spending these thousands upon thousands of pounds every year upon these useless buildings. Let us agree at once to this reduction, and, having agreed to it, let the right hon. Gentleman bring in a Bill to alter the contract we are said to have entered into. If this were done, we might be able to save £10,000 or £12,000 per annum. I do not ask Parliament to interfere with the palaces occupied by Her Majesty, but simply to exercise a reasonable control over a public expenditure which is absolutely nothing but waste.

(3.50.) SIR G. CAMPBELL (Kirkcaldy, &c.): As to the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown, I should like to understand what the real situation is. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean us to understand that Parliament as against the Crown cannot deal with this public property? There can be little doubt that if we were to approach the Crown in a becoming manner, the Crown would not be so unreasonable as to resist the desire of Parliament to get rid of this extravagant expenditure.

*(3.51.) MR. MORTON (Peterborough): We are not criticising the expenditure with regard to palaces occupied or partly occupied by Her Majesty, but buildings which are altogether in a different position. As I understand the right hon. Gentleman, it is only the Law Officers of the Crown who are against him. But the Government are not the House of Commons although they may have a majority with them sometimes. Surely the object of putting this expenditure into the Estimates at all is to enable us to consider whether it is worth while to go on with it and to continue paying these excessive sums year after year. I can easily understand that we are under some sort of contract with regard to the Royal Family and their friends, but I think we have a right to reduce some of these charges seeing that we have increased many of the allowances to the Royal Family. No complaint can reasonably be made against us if we desire to economise in reference to the expenditure upon these old and useless buildings. If they are to be maintained, they ought, at any rate, to be devoted to some useful purpose. In this particular case I think it would be of advantage to the British public to remove these buildings altogether and throw the ground upon which they stand into Kensington Gardens. I hope the hon. Member for Northampton will go to a Division, I shall have much pleasure in supporting him.

(3.53.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 39; Noes 63.—(Div. List, No. 107.)

Original Question again proposed.

(4.2.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I have yet another appeal to make to the Committee with regard to these palaces. I will pass over the Hampton Court Stud. The Committee well knows that that is a very outrageous charge made upon us. We are called upon to pay for a stud house there, and year after year I have asked in vain what becomes of the foals. I have now given the thing up in despair, and I no longer propose to make any inquiry after these foals. We next have Bushey House, gardens and stables, and every year we pay something like £465 for keeping them up. Bushey House is occupied by the Duke De Nemours. [An hon. MEMBER: Who is he?] He is a French nobleman, son of a monarch called Louis Philippe who once reigned in France. I am not surprised that my hon. Friend does not know who he is, because he is nobody except for his birth. Why we should spend more than £400 a year in maintaining a house in Bushey Park for the Duke De Nemours, a son of Louis Philippe, and a man exceptionally rich, who I believe never resides there, I cannot understand. Then I come to Kew Palace—but if any hon. Member will go down there he will have the greatest difficulty in discovering where the palace is. My belief is that it does not exist. I have seen a gate with a small house behind it, and I believe it is called a palace; but it is a misnomer. It is a gate with a few rooms behind it. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that persons risk their lives by living in Kensington Palace, but I should like to know who the persons are who live in Kew Palace—in connection with which we are asked to lay out a sum of £425 for sanitary works, and a further sum for re-construction of the gardener's cottage, bringing the total expenditure up to £470. We are to spend this money upon a place which nobody can find out. I have asked the inhabitants over and over again where Kew Palace was; and at last the place I have described was pointed out to me. I was perfectly aghast to find that we have been paying large sums of money to maintain a wretched cottage like this.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £30,285 (reduced in respect of Kew Palace), be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

*(4.9.) SIR J. SWINBURNE (Staffordshire, Lichfield): May I ask how many acres there are in Kew Gardens surrounding this so-called palace from which the public are shut out? I believe that there is a large acreage surrounding it at one end of the gardens from which the public are entirely excluded. I should like to know what the acreage is.

*(4.10.) MR. PLUNKET: Before the Committee go to a Vote upon the Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Northampton, I wish to explain that the sum of £425 is a gross sum asked for Kew Palace and other buildings on Kew Green. As a matter of fact, £238 is the only sum which is asked for in respect of Kew Palace, and a part of this is really a re-Vote from the Estimates of last year. All the houses on Kew Green—five or six in number—have to be supplied with new drainage, in order they may derive advantage from the new sanitary works of the Local Authority. A sum was taken last year for the purpose of connecting these houses with the new drain, and this is practically a re-Vote for the completion of the drainage works. In regard to the question of the hon. Member for Lichfield (Sir J. Swinburne), I am unable to state the precise number of acres in Kew Gardens which have been reserved for the palace, but I believe they are very few. I will, however, ascertain the exact number if the hon. Member will put a further question on the Report.

(4.11.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I should be glad to learn the exact number of acres reserved for Kew Palace, but there is something more I want to ascertain, namely, why they are not open to the public. The Palace is certainly a very gloomy one, and I cannot imagine a more serious punishment than being shut up in it. If no one resides there, and the Palace is of no use, why should it and its surroundings cost the country more than £1,000 a year? Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the suggestion of my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton, and take the railings down so that this part of the Gardens may be thrown open to the public?

(4.12.) MR. WADDY (Lincolnshire, Brigg): The right hon. Gentleman has stated that there are five or six houses. May I ask who live in them? What are these houses? [An hon. MEMBER: Gardeners' houses.] It is suggested on the other side that they are for the gardeners. We thought they constituted some palace in which some titled people were supposed to live; but it now turns out that there is not even that excuse for keeping them up. I should certainly like to know who lives in them, and if nobody lives in them and nobody wants to live in them, why on earth should they be kept up?

*(4.13.) MR. MORTON: I also should like to know who live in these cottages, and particularly who lives in Cambridge Cottage, in regard to which I see there is an item in the Vote for reconstruction. I think that persons who are in the receipt of large incomes ought not to be in this way a charge upon the State. Cambridge House appears to be a place of some magnitude, seeing that it has a gardener's cottage and grounds attached to it.

*(4.14.) MR. PLUNKET: It is no part of my province to go into these matters, and I would remind hon. Members that these buildings are Royal Palaces or houses, and the persons residing in them are those to whom Her Majesty has assigned them. Cambridge House is occupied by His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge, and one of the other buildings by Lady Helps.

MR. WADDY: Who occupy the other cottages?

*MR. PLUNKET: I am not aware at this moment; there are three others which are rather smaller.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Are we to understand that the Duke of Cambridge lives there in any part of the year?

*MR. PLUNKET: Yes.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: I must protest against the manner in which the Government bring forward Votes of this nature when there are only a handful of Members present to discuss them.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I hope the Committee will accept my explanation, and will not go to another Division. These buildings have always been granted by the Royal authority, and this particular portion of Kew Gardens has always been reserved, which is a very small portion of the grounds, as a lawn in front of Kew Palace. It is not at all unreasonable that the Sovereign should reserve a small portion of these grounds. All the rest has been thrown open to the public.

*(4.16.) Mr. MORTON: I understand that the cottages are occupied by certain persons during the pleasure of Her Majesty, and I am not going to dispute her rights. But we are told in the Votes that the country pays for light, fuel, water, and household articles. Surely it is not the business of the taxpayers of the country to supply light, water, fuel, and household articles to people who can well afford to pay for them themselves. There is also, I believe, a sum for tithes. I should have thought that members of the Royal Family would be the first to pay for tithes, and not call on the country to pay them. That is an item which certainly cannot be charged for the purpose of keeping the buildings in repair externally, and that is the only duty the right hon. Gentleman tells us the nation undertakes.

(4.18.) Sir G. TREVELYAN (Glasgow, Bridgeton): I should be very sorry to give a vote that would lead to the disappearance of the old Kew Palace, which is an extremely interesting historical monument, and an object of considerable architectural beauty. Nor do I object to the small area of ground reserved for the purpose of showing the palace to the best advantage. But this Vote has been challenged because it raises a principle upon which, I think, Parliament ought to pronounce an opinion. That principle I take to be this: when a private person takes a lease he undertakes certain obligations as to repair and maintenance, and the cost of structural additions to the house, which may happen in the course of the lease. I do not think it matters much what may have been done in the past. The time will come when the public will demand a change. Not long ago a demand was made for the throwing open of Constitution Hill, and it has now been conceded. It is only fair that those fortunate persons who live rent free in these palaces should undertake the obligations which ordinary leaseholders have to undertake. I shall certainly vote for the reduction moved by my hon. Friend, because I think the expense should fall upon the people who occupy the houses, and not upon the taxpayers.

*(4.21.) Mr. PLUNKET: All internal repairs and alterations for the benefit of the tenant are paid for by the tenant. The only alterations included in the Vote are necessary external and structural alterations. If the arrangement is to be reconsidered the proper time will be when the whole question of the Civil List arrangement is again considered by a Committee of the House. To get rid of these charges now would be a breach of the understanding upon which the Civil List is framed. The principle of the Civil List is that certain charges were placed upon the Estimates, and the Civil List was proportionately reduced at the commencement of the reign.

(4.23.) Mr. E. ROBERTSON (Dundee): What is the contract to which the right hon. Gentleman refers? The right hon. Gentleman misleads the House when he says that Parliament is under an obligation with regard to this expenditure. Are we to understand that these items appear in the Civil List account, and that there is a statutory obligation imposed on Parliament to bear the expense of these repairs?

*(4.24.) Mr. PLUNKET: I have explained over and over again that these expenses are not mentioned in the Civil List Act, but they are to be found in the Schedule of the Report of the Committee upon which the Civil List Act was based. The surrender of property by the Crown appears in the Act, but the conditions of the arrangement on which the Act is founded are only to be found in the Report of the Committee. It specifies what is to be placed on the Civil List and what is to be borne by the Votes of Parliament.

(4.26.) Mr. E. ROBERTSON: No doubt the right hon. Gentleman has explained the matter to Parliament several times, but always in the same way. He begins by alleging that a bargain was made, and ends by admitting that no such bargain exists.

*Mr. PLUNKET : No ; I admit nothing of the kind. I say that it does exist.

Mr. E. ROBERTSON : Then where is it to be found? The right hon. Gentleman says it is to be found in a Schedule appended to the Report of a Committee. That is no bargain or arrangement whatever. The right hon. Gentleman does not tell the House that these so-called hereditary revenues of the Crown are in no sense the property of the Crown at all, but are public property, and are subject to all the burdens of the country.

*(4.27.) Mr. MORTON : I must press for an answer to my question about the charges for fuel, light, water, household articles, and tithes. Do any of those charges apply to the little cottages he has referred to?

*(4.28.) Mr. PLUNKET : The hon. and learned Member for Dundee (Mr. E. Robertson) has charged me with giving up the case of a bargain. My contention is that the arrangement was a bargain so far as that word represents an obligation of honour and honesty. These houses and palaces were built or purchased at the expense of former monarchs, and were the property of the Sovereign, who had a right to dispose of them as they thought fit. A new arrangement was made by which the Civil List was reduced by more than one-half, and Parliament undertook, among other things, the maintenance and repair of the palaces, which were formerly borne by the Civil List. In answer to the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Morton), I may say that the item to which he refers applies to a number of buildings, in some of which it is necessary to have officers to take charge of them. In cases where gas is supplied to grace and favour inhabitants of these rooms, the inhabitants pay a contribution equivalent to the amount of the rates for the gas consumed.

*Mr. MORTON : May I ask where we shall find the account of the receipts for gas and other things?

*Mr. PLUNKET : They come under the head of extra receipts.

(4.31.) Mr. LABOUCHERE : In referring to the basis on which the Civil List is granted, the right hon. Gentleman has started a very large subject—a subject which, if treated as we ought to treat it, would engage our attention until midnight. But I do not intend to go into the matter fully. I merely wish to state that, so far as we are concerned, we absolutely deny that one single acre of the Crown lands or one single house on the Crown lands belongs in any way to the Sovereign personally. We assert that they are the property of the nation, and this was practically the view taken when the Civil List was granted at the commencement of the present reign. The whole thing turned on what was sufficient for the Crown, and it did not go beyond that. When the right hon. Gentleman bases our obligation year after year to pay these large sums upon the fact that this obligation was inserted in the Schedule to a Report of a Committee of this House that sat before the Act was brought in, I must say he puts it on a basis which is absolutely untenable. Let us vote in this matter on its own merits. Let us consider whether this money is usefully expended, and pay no heed to what this or that Committee recommended. Let us vote as we think right and proper.

(4.35.) The Committee divided :—Ayes 51 ; Noes 79.—(Div. List, No. 108.)

Original Question again proposed.

(4.44.) Sir G. CAMPBELL : As long as there are palaces in England I am not going to object to there being palaces in Scotland ; but there are one or two items relating to Holyrood Palace in regard to which I should like explanation. I notice that £32 is paid to the issuer of tickets of admission. The porter at the palace is provided with house and receives a salary, and I imagine he is the person who is paid the £32. Are these tickets issued gratis, and is the porter prohibited from taking "tips" for issuing them? I have never gone inside Holyrood Palace, but I think it is desirable that if we pay the porter, the public should be admitted free ; and I am anxious to know whether they are admitted free or not. Then I notice an allowance of £40 to the High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland for expenses attending the occupation of rooms in the palace. That seems a rather unnecessary ecclesiastical expense. It is generally considered a great honour to be High Commissioner, and the story goes of a distinguished nobleman asking to be appointed Master of the Buckhounds. The reply made to him was, "No, you swear so much; but I'll tell you what we will do, we will make you High Commissioner of the Church of Scotland." It does seem somewhat strange to pay the High Commissioner for the trouble of occupying these rooms. I should like explanation on these two points.

(4.46.) Mr. WADDY: Before we deal with the expenditure on Holyrood Palace I should like to draw special attention to a matter relating to Bushey House. It appears to me there is a very important principle involved. A great many of us object very strongly to the indirect system of pensioning, by means of which certain persons who may be in receipt of pensions already, have subventions in the shape of being allowed to live rent free in some of these houses or palaces supposed to belong to the Crown. But however objectionable that may be in itself, we are face to face with another and greater difficulty in connection with the occupation of Bushey House by the Duc de Nemours. What is the precise amount allowed in respect of that occupation I cannot say, but I think I shall not be far from the mark if I assume that the sum of at least £200 is allotted to Bushey House. If this were a subvention given to somebody who had served this country or who was the representative of some person who had served the country I could understand it. If it were given to the widow of some great soldier or great sailor who had deserved well of the country, or if it were given to some person distinguished in science or in art, whom we wished to assist, it would be intelligible, but there is not the slightest ground or justification of any sort upon any principle for making the nation pay for this gentleman. He is the son of a deceased Sovereign of a foreign State: he is the son of the late Louis Philippe. It is notorious he is a wealthy man, and with great courtesy and earnestness I ask the First Commissioner of Works upon what ground one single penny of English money is given for the support of this gentleman? An exile from France, I dare say he deserves, and I am sure he has, our sympathy. If he were in poverty I could understand some small pension being given to him, although it would be unreasonable. But if it were given to him it should be given directly, distinctly, definitely, so that we might know what we were about. That we should tax the people of this country in order to give a sum of money annually to this wealthy man who does not need it, and who, if he did need it, has no claim upon us, is monstrous. Why on earth we are to subscribe to the support of this gentleman any more than we subscribe to the support of the sons and daughters and grandsons and granddaughters of every Sovereign who has had the misfortune to be turned out of his Kingdom I do not understand. If the Duc de Nemours has any claim on the nation let us know what it is. I ask the Government to consider whether it is not time for something to be done to put an end to anomalies of this kind? I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £200.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £30,510 (reduced in respect of Bushy House), be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Waddy.*)

*(4.53.) Mr. MORTON: I shall be glad when the right hon. Gentleman replies to the hon. and learned Member below me if he will also tell us who are the "military Knights" who occupy houses at Windsor Castle? £335 appears to be spent upon them. I daresay it may be all right, but I think we are entitled to the information. I will, however, allow the hon. and learned Member's question to be dealt with first.

*(4.54.) Mr. PLUNKET: In answer to the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell), I may say that the very considerable sum of £1,100 a year is paid in fees for viewing Holyrood Palace. The Committee will therefore understand that the official referred to by the hon. Member has a good deal of work to do. As to the other point raised by the hon. Member, the sum of £40 referred to was incurred in preparing the rooms and obtaining the furniture that was necessary when the assembly of the Church of Scotland was held in Holyrood Palace. As regards the speech of the hon. and

learned Member for the Brigg Division of Lincolnshire (Mr. Waddy), the charge made in it was rather a strong one. The hon. and learned Member said this was an underhand way of giving a sum of money to a foreigner. That was a most extraordinary misrepresentation of what is being done. There is no money being given to "this foreigner." As to whether he be a rich or a poor man, the hon. and learned Member may know better than I do. I only know that the house is one of the Royal houses which Her Majesty has a right either to inhabit herself or to allow some other person to inhabit. As a matter of courtesy and friendship to a member of a family which was once the Royal Family of a neighbouring nation, Her Majesty has seen fit to allot this house to the French Duke to whom the hon. and learned Member has referred. The question for the Committee to consider is really not who inhabits these houses, but whether we rightly and economically administer these expenses of Royalty, which have been deliberately placed on the Votes. I would submit that it is not a proper mode of discussing these Estimates to discuss the occupation of each house. The exact sum spent upon this particular house is £270.

(4.58.) Sir G. CAMPBELL: I will not pursue the subject of the amount paid for the Assembly of the Church of Scotland. Considering that we have a Church of Scotland, perhaps a High Commissioner is passing cheap at £40 a year. I think, however, the right hon. Gentleman's reply with regard to Holyrood Palace discloses a Scottish grievance I have never heard that the country makes a profit by charging fees of admission to Royal Palaces. I have been to Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle, but cannot remember that I was charged a fee. Yet the right hon. Gentleman says the people of Scotland are charged £1,100 a year for viewing our one little Palace of Holyrood. It seems to me that this is a real Scottish grievance, and I hope the right hon. Gentleman will cease to make money out of the one Royal Palace which is kept up in Scotland.

(4.59.) Mr. WADDY: I am bound to point out that when I state, as I do, that this is a way of giving money to the Duc de Nemours, the right hon. Gentleman does not get out of the difficulty by saying that we give it to him in rent, and not in money. You are giving this gentleman a house rent free, and if that is not giving him money, or the equivalent, I do not know what is. You are practically keeping up this place at the expense of the British taxpayers in order that this foreign gentleman, to whom we owe nothing, should live there rentfree. To put the matter in order, now that I know from the right hon. Gentleman what the precise figure involved is, and if I am in order in doing so, I will substitute for my proposition a reduction by the sum of £270. If I cannot do that, I will proceed with my original Motion to reduce the Vote by £200.

The CHAIRMAN: Of course, that can be done by the withdrawal of one Motion and the substitution of another, but surely that is quite unnecessary.

(5.1.) Mr. A. O'CONNOR (Donegal, E.): I do not wish to proceed with the discussion of this particular item, but I should like to elicit from the First Commissioner what is exactly our position in regard to these public buildings. Are we to gather that he claims the right to quarter in these public buildings the ex-Empress of the French, King Milan, or the ex-Emperor of Brazil, or any ex-Sovereign or descendant of an ex-Sovereign who may be wandering about the face of the earth? If that is the position, let us clearly understand it; but I think it will be matter of surprise to many British subjects to learn that this is so.

*(5.2.) Mr. MORTON: I quite agree with the hon. Member it is an extraordinary thing if we are to understand that British taxpayers are to maintain these buildings that they may be tenanted by any runaway King, Prince, or President in all the world. If we have nothing to say as to who shall occupy these buildings, I think, at least, we may claim that whoever does occupy them shall relieve us from the cost of keeping the buildings in repair. Then I should like to have some information about these Military Knights at Windsor Castle——

The CHAIRMAN: An Amendment has been moved with a specific Reference, and that had better be disposed of first.

(5.6.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 55; Noes 85.—(Div. List, No. 109.)

Original Question again proposed.

(5.12.) DR. CLARK (Caithness): There is a sum of £1,100 a year derived from admission fees from visitors to Holyrood Palace; and formerly fees were charged for seeing special places of interest in palaces in England, as, for instance, an extra 6d. for seeing the vinery at Hampton Court. But, so far as England is concerned, this, I understand, has been abolished; and why, I would ask, is the charge for admission maintained at Holyrood? I shall be glad if the right hon. Gentleman will explain why this should be. I suppose the only way in which we can make our protest against the continuance of the practice is to take the absurd course of moving a reduction of the Vote. But I should like to be informed whether this custom of charging for admission to Holyrood is an exception to the general practice, and why it is maintained?

(5.13.) MR. BARCLAY (Forfarshire): I wish to support the claim that such places in Scotland should be opened free to the public as elsewhere they are. We certainly ought to have the reason, if reason there is, why an exception should be made in the case of Holyrood. The palace has much historical interest for visitors, many of whom come from across the Atlantic, and it certainly does seem a shabby thing to demand payment for seeing the interior of a Royal Palace maintained by the State. I hope the First Commissioner will give us an assurance that Holyrood shall in future be put on the same footing as other places in England in this respect.

*(5.15.) MR. PLUNKET: It may be that the attractions of Holyrood are much greater than at other places; but certainly there are a considerable number of visitors in the course of the year, and I have never heard any protest made against the payment of a fee for admission. It has never been put before me as matter of complaint. If the fee for admission is abolished, the amount derived from this source will have to be provided by an equivalent amount placed on the Estimates, and it is not usually an increase under this Vote that finds favour with hon. Members opposite. I will undertake that this question shall be considered, but I cannot give any pledge on the subject.

(5.15.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: The right hon. Gentleman does not fully represent the matter when he says the abolition of the entrance fees means adding an equal sum to the Estimates. We are now asked to vote a sum of £32 for the man who issues the tickets, and the sum of £1,100 is subtracted from the Estimates, and thus the Imperial Treasury is benefited by a sum of money derived from a purely Scottish source. I am a thorough Scotchman, I hope a typical Scotchman. For some 60 years I have constantly passed Holyrood Palace, and I did not quite remember why it was I never have seen the inside. Now I know it is because admission is refused unless by payment of 1s. Now I do not think a Scotchman ought to be required to pay 1s. to see the ancient palace of the Kings of his country.

(5.16.) MR. BARCLAY: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for the attention he has promised to give to this purely Scotch subject, but I should be glad if he would carry his assurance a little further. The right hon. Gentleman says no complaints have reached him, but this is the only way in which we can complain. Of course, he never hears of the complaints made to the attendant by visitors from whom payment is demanded. I hope we may have something more definite, some explanation why a charge of this kind is made in Scotland and not in England. However flattering it may be to Scotchmen to think that their historical associations in connection with Holyrood have more interest than those of Windsor, yet that is not a sufficient explanation. I see the Secretary to the Treasury is present, and from the Treasury point of view perhaps he can give us some explanation why there should be this charge. In default of such an explanation I suppose the only way in which we can express our dissatisfaction is by moving a reduction of the Vote.

(5.18.) DR. CLARK: That is the only course, absurd one though it seems, by which we can express our disapproval of the practice. When I raised this question a few years ago it was said the charge was a small one, and a similar charge was made at the

Tower, and for some special places in English Palaces; but now I understand that method of charging for admission has been given up in England, though it is maintained in Scotland. Now we in Scotland are in the habit of having these small sums taken from us, and are complimented upon our patience in submitting to the practice; but I cannot see why in this, as in various other little matters, Scotland should be exploited in this manner. Scotland is the only part of the Kingdom that does thus suffer, or if Ireland has any complaint it is as £1 in Ireland to £50 in Scotland. This is part of the miserable system. You keep up this charge against any patriotic Scotchman who desires to see the home of the old Scottish Kings, and there is no reason for keeping up the charge except that there has been no complaint of it. But there have been numerous complaints to the official who bars the entrance and demands payment, though those complaints may not have reached the right hon. Gentleman. Pending some more satisfactory statement than we have had I move the reduction of the Vote by £32.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £30,678 (reduced in respect of Holyrood Palace), be granted for the said Service."—(*Dr. Clark.*)

(5.20.) MR. W. A. HUNTER (Aberdeen, N.): I am astonished that the Government should insist upon keeping up this reprehensible, this iniquitous system of making a charge for admission. If we go to Paris and other continental cities, we find the public are admitted to such places free of charge, and the same thing can be said of palaces in England. But Holyrood is selected as an exhibition from which the Exchequer derives this income! It is the very height of meanness, for while we in Scotland are called upon to pay more than our fair share for items under this Vote, the people of Scotland are required to still further pay to see their own property. I hope we may have from the Government a categorical and explicit promise that this shall be put an end to. The subject has not been presented to the right hon. Gentleman before, but it is one that should only require to be mentioned.

(5.22.) MR. CALDWELL (Glasgow, St. Rollox): I think the Government will see the necessity of withdrawing this charge, in the interest of those who do not pay it, who are deterred by this fee. In Scotland there are few public buildings of this character. The people have to pay towards the support of many such in London, which they or the poorer classes among them never have an opportunity of visiting, and it is hard that when they avail themselves of excursion trains to Edinburgh they should be required to pay a fee for admission to Holyrood.

(5.23.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I hope the Secretary to the Treasury will have something to say upon this. I do not see any Scotch Minister on the Front Bench, and the only Cabinet Minister present is the Minister for Agriculture, who I suppose knows nothing at all of this subject. I do not quite agree with my hon. Friend that Scotchmen are exploited in these matters. On the contrary, I think Scotchmen are, as a rule, well able to take care of themselves, and get their full share of the cake. Still, I confess in this matter they have some sort of grievance. There are palaces in England into which the public are admitted without charge, and there is a palace in Scotland (Holyrood) where a fee is demanded for admission. Now, if you had a general rule for all Royal Palaces, I could understand the system, though I should regard it as a bad system, because I consider that, as the palace belongs to the nation, every taxpayer who helps to support it has a natural right of way into that palace. I need not elaborate the point; the right is recognised in England. But a charge is imposed in Scotland, and upon this I think we may fairly ask the Secretary to the Treasury, in the absence of any representative of the Scotch Department—though we do not expect him to know all about the matter—to say that he recognises it as a matter that requires consideration, and which ought to be decided in favour of the Scotch taxpayer.

*(5.25.) MR. MORTON: I imagine that this 1s. charge which goes to make up the £1,100 is not borne mainly by the Scottish people, but is paid by English and other visitors. This, however, is no reason why the charge should be made, and it is manifestly

unfair that, while there is no charge for admission to such places in England, there should be this charge in Scotland. The Scottish people are demanding Home Rule, and this is just one of those matters which they might be left to settle for themselves. It seems to me the time of a Committee of the whole House is wasted in trying to deal with these local matters.

(5.26.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I see the Secretary to the Treasury has fled from the appeals made to him. I will not accuse the Members of the Government of a conspiracy of silence. Certainly there is something very like it, but I will not attribute such a motive to them. I believe the truth is, they know nothing about this matter. There is an exemplification this evening of the evil habit of bringing forward Scotch questions on the first day of meeting after the holidays when few Scotch Members are present. In the same way the proposal for the Committee on the Scotch Private Bill Procedure Bill was thrust upon us just as we were rising for the holidays. You dare not bring forward Irish Votes under such circumstances. We have not any Member of the Government representing Scotland present. I understand that the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner has given some sort of promise in a jocose manner, but I think we ought to have a pledge that this matter shall be seriously considered.

(5.28.) MR. BARCLAY: I do respectfully submit that Scotch Members who have spoken are entitled to some further answer. It must be apparent to the right hon. Gentleman that there is a strong feeling on this, which may seem to him a twopenny-halfpenny matter, and I hope he will go so far as to say that the subject shall be considered with a view to the charge being abandoned.

(5.30.) THE SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. JACKSON, Leeds, N): I hope it will not be thought that I desired to shirk any responsibility; but the fact is, my right hon. Friend (Mr. Plunket) is in charge of the Vote, and as I regard him as perfectly competent to deal with the matter, I have not thought it necessary to remain in the House during the whole of the Debate. I do not think that this is much of a Scotch grievance. I agree with the hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Morton) that in all probability the larger part of this charge is paid by English excursionists; but, be that as it may, the question now raised will receive the careful consideration of Her Majesty's Government. I can make no promise that this charge will be remitted; and perhaps I may here say that, although I hear a great deal about economy from time to time, I never observe that the Government receives much support, either when it wishes to maintain an income or even when it proposes to diminish expenditure. It must be remembered that if you take this £1,100 a year from the revenue the loss will have to be made up from some other source. That, of course, may not be a reason for maintaining this charge. I will draw the attention of my right hon. Friends the First Lord of the Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to the representations from hon. Members from Scotland, and can promise that the subject of those representations shall be carefully considered.

(5.33.) MR. CALDWELL: This is clearly a Scotch, more than an English, grievance. It is true that a large number of visitors from England pay to go over Holyrood Palace, but vast numbers of Scotch people never see the inside of the building at all.

(5.34.) DR. CLARK: It seems to me desirable to take a Division if only to strengthen the hands of the Secretary to the Treasury and to bring the necessary pressure to bear on him. As a rule, when Scotch questions are under discussion, English Members do not attend; but to-night we have a large number of English Members present, and probably they will support us. The result of pressure of that kind being put upon the Government may be to bring about the change we desire.

(5.35.) MR. BARCLAY: I quite sympathise with the Secretary to the Treasury when he says that the Government are not sufficiently supported when they propose economies. But this is a question of justice as between the two countries. If the right hon. Gentleman were to propose a charge for admission to palaces in England, he being in want of revenue, I should support him; but this is not a question of economy or revenue: it is one of justice. I think the answer the right hon. Gentleman has given is satisfactory. If in the course of another year he has not redeemed his promise he will, I think, propose this Vote with a great deal of trepidation. But, for the present, I do not think he could give any greater pledge than he has done, and I therefore appeal to my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness to withdraw his Motion for a reduction of the Vote.

(5.36.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I hope that what has fallen from the Secretary to the Treasury may be taken as amounting to a serious promise. I would point out that when strangers—Englishmen and Americans—visit Scotland they do not understand the financial arrangements between the two countries, and look upon the Scotch as a stingy people, charging 1s. in Scotland for a privilege which in England is granted for nothing.

(5.37.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 55; Noes 100.—(Div. List, No. 110.)

Original Question again proposed.

*(5.46.) MR. MORTON: I should like to know who are the "Military Knights" who are stated in the Estimate to occupy houses at Windsor Castle? I would also ask who are the persons who occupy the other buildings: Pembroke Lodge, The Thatched House, East Sheen Cottage, Hawthorne Lodge, Hawthorne Cottage, and the cottages in Bushey Park? Without this information we have no means of forming an opinion as to whether or not this Vote should be allowed.

*(5.47.) MR. PLUNKET: The cottages occupied by the Military Knights are really almshouses. They are occupied by a number of deserving and poor Military Officers under a custom which has come down from the time of Henry VIII. This really is a good service pension, the condition of its enjoyment being, I believe, that those who occupy the houses shall go to church twice a day. As to the other cottages, they are occupied as follows: Pembroke Lodge is occupied by Lady Russell, the Thatched House by Lady Bowater, and the East Sheen Cottage by Sir Richard Owen.

*(5.49.) MR. MORTON: I do not object to the Military Knight business now I know what it means; but I must say I object to these good conduct people being compelled to go to Church twice a day. If they want to go to Church let them, but do not compel them to do so. This seems to me a most unfortunate condition to attach to a good service pension, and if the right hon. Gentleman has any influence, I would suggest to him that he should try and get the condition removed. As for the other cottages, they are occupied by people who could pay, and, therefore, ought to pay, rent; and in respect of these dwellings, I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £100.

Motion made, and Question put, "That a sum, not exceeding £30,610, be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Morton.*)

The Committee proceeded to a Division:—

Mr. MORTON was appointed a Teller for the Ayes; but no Member being willing to act as second Teller, the Chairman declared that the Noes had it.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £78,904, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, for the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens."

(5.57.) MR. PICKERSGILL (Bethnal Green, S.W.): I wish to move a nominal Amendment to this Vote, in order to protest against the continued exclusion of the public from Hampton Court Park. We have in that park an area of beautifully wooded country nearly as large as Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens put together, and from that area the public are absolutely excluded, although there are a few privileged persons who are allowed, for a nominal payment, to enter when they think fit. I find we are charged £701 for the maintenance of Hampton Court Park, but there is a note appended to the Vote, stating that the extra receipts of the park are estimated at about £850 per annum. The set-off, however, is only nominal. I may mention, as a singular illustration of the growing demand for the opening of this park, that in the course of last year a large and influential meeting was held in the Mansion House to advocate that which I am now asking for. It is true that the Lord Mayor, who presided, and who had convened the meeting, was not altogether at one with some of those who spoke at the meeting; but the difference was really of a very insignificant character. Some of the more ardent spirits insisted, as a right, on the opening of the park, whilst the Lord Mayor, with that courtliness which I suppose is natural to his office, thought we ought rather to ask it as a boon of the Royal grace. That is a very insignificant matter, and not one on which I should care to risk the obtaining of a substantial benefit. As long as the First Commissioner will open the park, I care not whether he will do so as a boon, or whether he will recognise it as a right. I move the reduction of the Vote by £100.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £78,804 (reduced in respect of Hampton Court Park), be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

*(6.0.) MR. PLUNKET: I certainly have nothing to say against the fair and moderate way in which this Motion has been brought forward by the hon. Member for Bethnal Green. The hon. Member has confined his statement to the raising of two new points that have reference to Hampton Court Park. I would point out that the portion of Hampton Court Park to which he refers is let for a sum of £860, while the total expenses of the Park amount to £701, thus leaving a balance in favour of the Treasury. It is, therefore, not a charge upon the country. But if the hon. Member's suggestion were adopted, a certain addition to the expenses of the park would be involved, and instead of a small balance in our favour, we should have to meet an additional capital outlay of £400 or £500, as well as a new annual charge of considerable amount. That is an expenditure from which we would not shrink, however, if there were any great and serious need for throwing open the ground referred to. But hard by are the pleasure gardens of the Palace, and only on the other side of the road there is the whole extent of Bushey Park, which can be ranged from end to end. A certain portion of the residents in the neighbourhood of Kingston Bridge are to some extent inconvenienced in getting access to Bushey Park; but I am glad to say that the Treasury have consented to an expenditure of £950 for the construction of a new approach and gateway, which will remove that cause of grievance. Bushey Park is a much preferable park for pleasure seekers, compared with Hampton Court. We have really done our best to meet the grievance which exists.

(6.7.) MR. J. ROWLANDS (Finsbury, E.): I think the statement that a new gateway into Bushey Park is to be constructed only goes to show that there is great inconvenience to one portion of the population in the neighbourhood. What we require is that the whole of this park shall be thrown open to the people. There is not, I think, an acre too much land for the growing population in that end of London, and it will be all needed to serve as a lung for that quarter of the Metropolis. I do not see why the people should be kept out of this particular park. And while I quite appreciate the advantages of Bushey Park, I do not agree that the Government have given a reason for keeping this park closed, and I hope they will cause it to be thrown open so as to be of service to this densely populated neighbourhood.

(6.12.) MR. PICKERSGILL: I hope the Committee will not be misled by the financial aspects of the question. The facts are simply these: at present we are paying £700 a year for the up-keep of the park, while, the right hon. Gentleman states, receipts to the amount of £850 for this land throw the balance to the right side. It is simply this, that the use of this park for the use of the royal foals, is estimated at £850 a year. But I put it, whether if this park is thrown open, there is any reason to suppose that we should have to pay £850 to provide a place elsewhere for these animals. There is nothing inconsistent with the maintenance of these animals in throwing this particular park open to the public.

(6.14.) MR. LABOUCHERE: The argument of the right hon. Gentleman is that the letting of this particular portion of Hampton Court Park brings in a certain sum; but he might equally argue that the grazing of Hyde Park should be let for £2,000 a year. Parks are not kept for the purpose of earning income by letting portions of them; they are intended for the enjoyment of the public. We want the whole of Hampton Court Park; we want to see the people who crowd there on a Bank Holiday and on Sunday not crowded like sheep in a pen, but free to roam about, with benefit to their health and morals greater than they would receive by going to some public house in London. To say that the land is let for £850 a year is not an argument. The right hon. Gentleman has told us that foals are kept there, and there are not only foals, but those peculiar pink horses which are used to draw Her Majesty's carriages on state occasions. But whether it is for the foals or for these pink horses, this system of closing a large portion of the open space which should be available for the use of the public ought to be done away with.

*MR. H. J. WILSON (York, W.R., Holmfirth): I think the right hon. Gentleman ought to state what is done with these foals, and whether the £850 is really paid for their grazing, or what is the amount actually received for their keep.

(6.16.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE (Bradford, Central): I think the right hon. Gentleman opposite has hardly advanced a sufficient argument in answer to what has been put forward by my hon. Friend. The right hon. Gentleman is doubtless well aware that there is a great demand for good ground for cricket playing, and there has been a general impression that Hampton Court Park is one of the places where ground for that purpose might reasonably be offered. I should like to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman has not received an application from a Committee which has had this matter under consideration—that ground should be provided in Hampton Court Park for this propose? It certainly does seem to me to be very absurd that we should be using a large portion of the open ground there for the breeding of a certain number of colts when the ground might be more beneficially devoted to the use of the public.

*(6.18.) MR. PLUNKET: I do not think that any such application as the right hon. Gentleman has referred to has come under my notice with regard to the use of ground in Hampton Court Park for such purposes as he has referred to—in fact, I may say that no such application has reached the Department. I know very well that one of the objects in asking for the opening of the gate into Bushey Park, near Kingston Bridge, was to give more ready access to the cricket ground near that gate, and I think that there are greater facilities for cricket in connection with the existing ground than would be obtained by opening up that portion of Hampton Court Park which has been alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. H. J. WILSON: I must ask the right hon. Gentleman if he can give some information about the foals?

*MR. PLUNKET: All I can say with regard to the foals is that they are half breds, and are under the management of the Master of the Horse.

The Committee divided:—Ayes 60; Noes 105.—(Div. List, No. 111.)

Original Question again proposed.

*(6.31.) MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I beg now to move the reduction of the Vote by £51,068, the charge for the maintenance of the Royal Parks. I believe there is nothing that the artisan and agricultural population of the country feel more acutely than being called upon to pay for the maintenance of the London parks. It is ridiculous to suggest that a working man in the country has any interest in keeping up, say, of Kensington Gardens. No doubt many country people visit the parks in the course of the year, and very much enjoy themselves there, but, after all, they form only a small portion of those who use the parks. Why should not London pay for its own parks? No doubt it will be remembered that when, in 1886, a similar Motion was made by my hon. Friend the senior Member for Northampton, and was carried—a Liberal Government being then in power—the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Wolverhampton, who was then Secretary to the Treasury, proposed, with the consent of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that the parks which were not Royal Parks should be struck out of the Estimates, and that the expense of maintaining them should be thrown on the Metropolitan Board of

Works. My hon. Friend accepted that offer as a reasonable compromise. But that was five years ago. Public opinion on this matter has since made further advances, and I imagine the hon. Member will agree with me, there is no reason why the London County Council should not be called upon to keep up all these parks—Royal as well as non-royal. Under these circumstances I move the reduction of the Vote.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £27,836 (reduced in respect of the London Royal Parks), be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Cobb.*)

*(6.38.) MR. PLUNKET: The hon Member has supplied the answer to his objection—namely, that an arrangement was made and accepted as a fair and reasonable compromise that parks like Victoria Park, Kennington Park, and Battersea Park, which are in no true sense Royal Parks or central in their character, or enjoyed by the general public coming from different parts of the kingdom, should be maintained by London itself. Accordingly, those parks have been handed over to the London County Council, and are now being maintained by that body. No one can contend that the parks which are still retained on the Estimates are of the same local character. Multitudes of people from all parts of England, Scotland, and Wales, indeed from all parts of the earth, visit these parks, and I believe that the people of the country, as a whole, thoroughly enjoy the great beauty and amenity of those Royal Parks, and are, in a certain sense, proud of them.

(6.40.) MR. LABOUCHERE: It is true that when the proposal was made to leave only the Royal Parks on the Estimates, I accepted that as a reasonable compromise. But what is a compromise? I take it it is accepting one-half of what is demanded until it is possible to get the other half. Well, I then got a half of what I wanted. I do not see that that is any reason why I should not now try to get the other half. The right hon. Gentleman says that these parks are enjoyed more by persons who live out of London than by those resident in the Metropolis. That may be the case, for the parks are a novelty to many of the visitors; but, remember, anyone living in London is able to go into the parks more frequently than a visitor to town. Generally speaking, the visitors are persons of considerable means, and yet the masses of the population are being taxed to enable these well-to-do persons to enjoy visits to these parks. I doubt if any of the artisans in my own constituency, for instance, ever visit these parks; then why should they be taxed for maintaining them? The right hon. Gentleman says that all England is proud of the parks; so, in like fashion, we may be proud of a good many other things, but that is no reason why we should be taxed for keeping them up. The right hon. Gentleman also spoke as if they were the most beautiful parks in the world; but I believe that the parks in many foreign towns are much more beautiful. That, however, is a matter of taste, and I think the right hon. Gentleman's sentiments do more honour to his patriotism than to his taste. Now, I want to know why London should not pay for its own parks. It seems to me—in view of the fact that these parks increase the value of the land around them—that the ground landlords of London should be called upon to pay for their maintenance. But whether you throw the charge upon the ground landlords or upon the ratepayers generally, I entirely demur to the view that there was a final settlement of this question when a certain number of parks were transferred to the governing body of London. I shall certainly vote with my hon. Friend in favour of this reduction.

*(6.43.) MR. WINTERBOTHAM (Gloucester, Cirencester): I agree that artisans and labourers in the country object to being called upon to pay for keeping up these London parks. It is a sore point with them that the London parks should be maintained out of the general taxation of the country. No doubt it is true that country people now and then visit the parks of London and enjoy them, but against this Londoners go into the provinces and enjoy the parks which are maintained in many cities and towns by the Local Authorities, yet these authorities do not ask the nation to contribute to the cost of keeping up their parks. I think it is only reasonable and right that London should pay for its own parks; and therefore if my

hon. Friend presses his Motion to a Division I shall support him.

*(6.44.) MR. COBB (Warwick, S.E., Rugby): I cannot agree with the right hon. Gentleman opposite that the nation ought to maintain the Royal Parks. I do not see how Primrose Hill is more central than Battersea Park, and if the public ought to support the former they ought equally to pay the cost of keeping up the latter. The fact is, these Royal Parks are fashionable resorts, and they are kept up for the benefit of the wealthier classes. They are but little used by the artisan classes. I certainly shall press my Motion for a reduction.

(6.48.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 42; Noes 112.—(Div. List, No. 112.)

Original Question again proposed.

(6.55.) MR. LABOUCHERE: This Vote includes the provision for Richmond Park. I notice that the Estimates have been so altered of late years that the persons employed practically as gamekeepers have now disappeared from them. A very large number of high officials at high salaries are employed in connection with the park. I venture to say that no nobleman would attempt to maintain a park on so extravagant a plan. The bailiff of the Royal Parks gets £700 a year, the superintendent of Richmond Park gets £250, the assistant superintendent £90; the keeper gets £259 and his deputy about £100. In fact everything is done on a grandiose scale. Now, one of the reasons for employing so many persons is, that the shooting in Richmond Park is the perquisite of the Duke of Cambridge. His Royal Highness goes down there a certain number of times every year to shoot. Again, there are a vast number of rabbits, and the rabbit-holes are a serious danger to horse-riders. I shall not move a reduction, but I wish to point out that it would be desirable if the right hon. Gentleman could come to some arrangement with that eminent warrior the Duke of Cambridge, so that His Royal Highness may disport himself elsewhere than in a park intended for the recreation of the people. I call attention to the subject in order to give the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner (Mr. Plunket) an opportunity of assuring the House that something will be done in this matter. This is a very old story. Complaints have been continually made that the cost of keeping up the park is excessive, and that the excessive expenditure is due to the fact that the park is kept up to a certain extent as a game preserve for His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge.

*(7.1.) MR. PLUNKET: The hon. Member is entirely mistaken in supposing that any part of the expense of the game that is shot by the Royal Ranger is borne by the nation. The whole of the expense, including the purchase of eggs, the rearing and feeding of the game and so on, is paid by the ranger. As to the deer, they are kept there for the enjoyment of the public and they are the only animals in the park that are paid for by the public.

(7.3.) MR. LABOUCHERE: Will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to say to whom these deer go? I suppose they propagate their species like other animals, and that if they were left alone they would soon grow too numerous for the limits of the park. I suppose a certain number are killed every year. Venison is a saleable article. I am told all kinds of persons receive presents of the Richmond Park venison. Will the right hon. Gentleman give us a list of these persons?

*(7.4.) MR. PLUNKET: The venison is sent to eminent men. Presents of it are made to the Lord Mayor and various officers of State such as the Lord Chancellor and the Home Secretary. It is necessary to kill some of the deer in order to keep them at a proper number. The lists are made up in accordance with an old custom.

(7.5.) MR. LABOUCHERE: We hear a great deal about the wisdom of our ancestors, but I really am beginning to think that our ancestors were the most reckless, extravagant, and silly people that could possibly have existed. It is a matter for wonder that the world went on with such people in it. Whenever we call attention to the existence of an abuse a Minister gets up and attributes it to the wisdom of our ancestors. I do not see why we should perpetuate this £100 a year for the Duke of Cambridge with the right of shooting thrown in, for, although the right hon. Gentleman says eggs are not bought by His Royal Highness, unquestionably a considerable number of park-keepers are employed for the purpose of preventing poaching. I could inform the right hon. Gentleman of cases which have been brought before the Magistrates at Richmond, and which prove my statement. I do not advocate that the venison should be sold by auction, as that would not be a dignified way of disposing of it. But why should it not be given to the poor? I should have thought the Lord Mayor would have been the last person to give it to, and I am sure his health would be better if it were not given to him. These are our deer, and I say that, instead of being given to the Lord Mayor and to other people with large incomes, they should be distributed among the hospitals, or some similar course should be adopted.

(7.9.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: With regard to the rabbits, on all well-ordered estates an attempt is made to get rid of them, and I think Her Majesty's representatives in the park ought to try and get rid of them too. I want to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he can give us any information on the vexed question of the mortality among the trees? Has it been stopped, or is it still going on?

*(7.10.) MR. MORTON: I should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would explain why the Lord Mayor of London gets this deer. [*Cries of* "Oh!"] Well, there may be something wrong about it. Why should the Lord Mayor of London and no other Lord Mayor get the deer? The City Corporation at one time had charge of Richmond Park for the people; is this present of venison to the Lord Mayor a sort of bribe to prevent the City reclaiming the Park? Then, I should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would tell us what service the Duke of Cambridge renders for the £109 10s. which he is paid; whether he does anything at all, and whether there is any necessity to have a Ranger? I understand that if there was no Ranger there would be no difficulty in regard to the shooting. I should also like to know whether the Ranger has the right to reserve any portion he chooses of this public park for shooting purposes

Mr. Labouchere

without the consent of the House of Commons or anyone else, because, if so, he possesses a most extraordinary right. If the Ranger has such right perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will tell us how he acquired it, and whether we have any power to take it away. I notice that the sum of £96 is taken as an allowance in lieu of fees. I should be glad to hear an explanation of the item. A large item is set down for keepers who are supposed to be used for the purpose of preserving the game. I suppose that includes the persons who are employed at night in watching game. What is the meaning of the estimated cost of the park-keepers? Is that for park-keepers who are now employed or may be employed?

*(7.14.) MR. COBB: Can the right hon. Gentleman say if arrangements can be made to keep the road through the Park open all night? It would be a great convenience to a number of residents on both sides, and especially to medical men, who now have to drive a long way round. I wish also to ask whether the Bill for making a railway across Kensington Gardens has been abandoned?

*(7.15.) MR. PLUNKET: Before we dismiss the interesting subject of the deer, I may mention that all the gentlemen who receive venison have to pay for it, and I know that a good many people, including the individual who has now the honour of addressing the Committee, have often refused to accept it, as the expense entailed in accepting it really made the game not worth the candle. However, I may say that the receipt of the venison by the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London is a privilege which they have enjoyed for 300 or 400 years.

*MR. MORTON: Who gets the money?

*MR. PLUNKET: It goes as extra receipts into the Exchequer, and is a set-off against the expenses of the park. Then I have been asked as to the plantations. I do not think anyone will contend that the plantations in Richmond Park are excessive; but, be that as it may, the plantations are not there for the sake of the game, but for the additional beauty they lend to the park. As regards Kensington Gardens, I am glad to say that the measures which have been taken to arrest the decay of the trees have, to some extent, been successful. I am inclined to think that every year the conditions under which the trees are growing are somewhat improved by the precautions taken. On the other hand, the difficulty of rearing fine trees is very great. The soil is, in many parts, of a very watery and sandy kind, but we have done, and are doing, our best to preserve the trees. As to the proposed railway or subway through Kensington Gardens, I may say that the Bill has been withdrawn, but I can assure hon. Members that before that event I did take measures to prevent any interference with the fine trees in the gardens. If the proposal is revived I shall certainly renew my exertions in that direction. The hon. Member for Peterborough asked me for an explanation of the allowance in lieu of fees. The fees are now paid into the Exchequer, and will not be continued to this man's successor.

*(7.20.) Mr. MORTON: The right hon. Gentleman misunderstands my question. I asked what duties the Ranger performs for the £109 10s. which he receives?

*Mr. COBB: And will the right hon. Gentleman state what chance there is of the road I spoke of being opened all night?

*Mr. PLUNKET: In answer to the hon. Member for Peterborough, I cannot say what the particular services of this man are: they are no doubt connected with the care of the deer. As to the opening of the road through Hyde Park, the difficulty is that if you open that road you must open the whole of the park, which would involve great expense in the way of protection.

*(7.21.) Mr. MORTON: I want to know what services the Duke of Cambridge, the Ranger of Richmond and other Parks, performs for £109 10s.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I said the fees are not to be charged in the future.

*Mr. MORTON: I am not on the fees now. I am asking for an explanation of the payment to the Duke of Cambridge as Ranger.

*Mr. PLUNKET: That is a payment to which the Ranger of Richmond Park is entitled under warrant, as all former Rangers have been.

(7.22.) Mr. PICKERSGILL: I desire to ask the right hon. Gentleman what decision he has come to on a matter of some importance. I refer to the wages paid to the labourers at Hampton Court and Kew. If I am correctly informed there is here a real and substantial grievance which I am sure the Committee would desire to remedy. The case as put forward by the men themselves is this: They are receiving from the right hon. Gentleman wages which are less by 4s. a week than the wages paid to similar labourers employed by private persons in the locality. I know that the Local Authorities are thoroughly in sympathy with the men in the matter, and only a few weeks ago a very large and influential meeting was held at Richmond to support the claims of the labourers. I will not pursue the subject further now, but I should be glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman any statement he has to make. In the meanwhile, I propose to move a nominal reduction of £100.

The CHAIRMAN: It is quite unnecessary to propose a nominal reduction unless the hon. Gentleman wishes.

Mr. PICKERSGILL: I desire to do so.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £78,804 (reduced in respect of the Labourers' Wages), be granted for the said Service."—(*Mr. Pickersgill.*)

*(7.25.) Mr. PLUNKET: It is quite true that a public meeting was held in Richmond with regard to the wages paid to the labourers employed in Kew Gardens, and as a result of that meeting a deputation did me the honour of waiting upon me a fortnight or three weeks ago. I went very carefully and fully into the details of the claims of the labourers, and I think I satisfied the deputation that, having regard to the exceptional advantages which the labourers in Kew Gardens enjoy in many ways—as regards sick pay, the attendance of medical officer gratis, pensions and other matters—so far from being ill-used or badly paid, they receive wages really above the average of those given to others in the neighbourhood. Their employment is eagerly desired by labourers.

MR. PICKERSGILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman state what wages they receive?

*MR. PLUNKET: The hon. Gentleman put down a notice with regard to the labourers at Hampton Court, and as to them I have all the details here. I cannot exactly say what the labourers at Kew Gardens receive, but I believe the minimum is 18s. a week. I am in communication with the Director at Kew as to whether some change cannot be made as to holidays and Sunday work. At the Hampton Court Pleasure Grounds one man receives 30s. a week, another receives 24s., and all the other labourers with the exception of two receive 18s., which is 1s. more than they received formerly. We compared the sums we were paying with the sums paid in corresponding employments in the neighbourhood, and we came to the conclusion that 17s. was not enough. We therefore raised the wages to 18s. It is quite true that the rate of wages paid to the labourers at Kew Gardens is not quite so high as that paid by the Corporation of Richmond, but I think I satisfied the deputation that, on the whole, the rate of wages we paid was not unreasonable.

(7.30.) MR. J. ROWLANDS: I do not think the right hon. Gentleman need have felt very nervous in coming before Committee of Supply if he had extended his generosity a little further in regard to these labourers. I do not think criticisms from this side of the House would have been in the direction of blame for a reasonable advance in the wages paid to labourers at Hampton Court or Kew Gardens: our criticisms are generally launched at increases in salaries where such are not really required. Thus it has been this evening when we have had the Government supporting a system of indoor relief for persons who do not need it, and this stands out in strong distinction to the refusal to give better treatment to the labourers in these cases under notice. I think the right hon. Gentleman gave up the whole of his case when he admitted that the labourers under the Corporation of Richmond receive wages at a higher rate. The right hon. Gentleman says the rate of 18s. was fixed according to the standard of wages paid for similar work in the neighbourhood, and certainly such a rate does not allow a man many of the luxuries of this life. Surely a representative body like the Corporation of Richmond may be taken as fixing a standard which cannot be considered extravagant by the ratepayers. I think 18s. a week is little enough if a man is expected to give the whole of his time, and I should be glad to know what hours the men work. I hope the hours are not long. I think that with the same amount of expenditure we might commence levelling up a little, and any increase might be met by a levelling down of the higher salaries paid to officials.

(7.33.) MR. A. M'ARTHUR (Leicester): I should like to ask, also, what is the rule in regard to Sunday labour in the gardens, and whether the men are allowed any holidays, and whether the men are paid at the rate of six or seven days a week?

(7.34.) MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): In connection with the subject, I should be glad of some explanation as to the payment of night watchmen referred to on page 12, and also of labourers acting as patrols on Sundays and holidays. We have the amount set down, but the number of labourers is not given, so that we cannot ascertain at what rate payment is made. Is this extra pay or not? I cannot help suggesting to the First Commissioner, who says he has endeavoured to equalise the pay to that usual in the district, that it might be desirable to commence the equalisation with reference to the pay of higher functionaries in connection with public parks and gardens. For instance, I may draw attention to the payment of more than £2 a week to the Ranger. The question has been asked, what are the duties of the Ranger, and, until we get this explicit information, we cannot form an estimate of the value of his services as compared with the work of the labourers and others. I should like to know, therefore, that we may gauge the fairness of the rate of pay generally, what number of times in the year the Duke of Cambridge visits the park, and what is the character of the work for which he receives more than twice the amount of the pay the majority of the labourers receive for work they actually do. If the right hon. Gentleman is willing to pay a fair wage for work done he will see it is necessary to know what amount of time is given to the discharge of the functions of the Ranger. It is no answer to say that the Duke of Cambridge, the present Ranger, has a perfectly legal right to the customary fees. We are here to consider things from a wholly different point of view than has prevailed heretofore, and have the right to question the application of the money we vote, whether for the payment of Duke or peasant. In connection with this rangership it seems to me a paltry sum to be paid to a person in the position of a Royal Duke, and such a personage might well, methinks, take a higher tone, and say, "Let this small sum go to the benefit of the labourers." Whatever the legal title to payment may be, it is competent for this House to sweep it away. I do not say that we should now make any proposition of that kind; but I hope the right hon. Gentleman will give us an assurance that throughout all grades of *employés* the scale of pay shall be in proportion to duties performed.

(7.40.) Mr. PICKERSGILL: The right hon. Gentleman has given me a courteous, but I cannot say it is an altogether satisfactory, reply. Eighteen shillings a week is not a satisfactory remuneration, and the right hon. Gentleman admits that the Corporation of Richmond pay a higher rate. I know that the London County Council pay at a higher rate. In the circumstances, I am afraid I must put the Committee to the trouble of dividing, and in doing so I would appeal to hon. Members on both sides to recognise the extreme importance of the State, when acting as a direct employer of labour, acknowledging the fair claims of labour.

*(7.41.) Mr. PLUNKET: If the hon. Member chooses to go to a Division, of course I cannot prevent him doing so. But, first, I may add something to what I have already said in answer to the questions that have been asked. I have been asked the hours of employment. At Hampton Court and at Kew, in summer the labourers' hours are from 6 to 6, with two hours off, and in winter from 8 to 4, with one hour off. They have a fortnight's holiday. As regards the park-keepers, they have a day off in return for Sunday employment. As regards workmen employed as patrols, they get extra pay for that work. Half of these get 18s., and half 20s. a week; but I must also say that I pointed out, during the discussion with the deputation which waited upon me, that in addition to the pay workmen in the Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens have other advantages, and taking it altogether their position is a comfortable one, and compares favourably with others in a similar position. As regards Sunday labour, I may add that I am making inquiries, and I have given directions to the overseer at Hampton Court Pleasure Gardens to look over the list, and, if he considers there is any man who is really entitled to higher pay, to recommend him for an increase. I saw the overseer within the last few days, and he tells me that so far he really does not think there is any good claim for an increase in wages. I think the hon. Member must admit that I have gone carefully into the matter, and I have endeavoured to do what is fair. As regards what has been said by the hon. Member for Camborne, it is hardly necessary to point out that all duties are not to be estimated on the same basis; but I can assure the Committee that His Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge is most constant and assiduous in the discharge of his duties as Ranger and Superintendent, and I have derived the greatest assistance from his advice in relation to the Royal Parks.

(7.45.) Colonel HUGHES (Woolwich): I think that Her Majesty's Government will ultimately find that the lowest wages that should be paid by them for unskilled labour in or near London is £1 a week. It is not fair to make comparisons between the rate of wages paid in provincial towns or in agricultural districts, and that that should be adopted in the Metropolis owing to the larger amount which the London labourer has to pay for his lodging and his food. Remember, too, that many of the men have wives and families to support. I therefore trust that the Government will consent to raise the rate of wages for unskilled labour in every Department in London to a minimum of £1 a week.

(7.47.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: From living in the neighbourhood of the park, I have had many representations made to me, and I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that the labourers in all the Royal Parks in the neighbourhood of London, and especially at Hampton Court and Bushey, are paid on a lower scale of wages than that adopted by private employers.

(7.48.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 34; Noes 88.—(Div. List, No. 113.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

3. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £29,625, be granted to Her Majesty to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1892 for Houses of Parliament Buildings."

(7.57.) COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I wish to move a reduction of this Vote by £2,000; and I wish it to be understood that my Amendment is exclusively directed to the House of Lords part of the building. It is in no way antagonistic to the House of Lords as a part of the Constitution; and, indeed, I am actuated rather by a Conservative than a Radical motive. The House of Lords has abrogated a privilege which Members of this House formerly enjoyed; and, to mark our sense of this, I move this reduction, the effect of which, if carried, would necessitate a more economical arrangement of matters by the House of Lords. Members of the House of Lords have been provided with some elaborately decorated rooms, some of them adorned with beautiful frescoes. Two of these are well known to the public by engravings —"Trafalgar," and the "Meeting of Wellington and Blucher." I do not in the least object to these and other frescoes being in the positions in which they are; they are beautiful works of art, whether they are in the Queen's Robing Rooms, never by any accident used by Her Majesty, or in Committee Rooms. In former times Members of this House had the privilege, with the permission of the official, of taking a constituent or a member of the outside public to see these frescoes while the House of Lords was sitting. For many years after I entered Parliament I availed myself of this privilege; but in the last four or five years the House of Lords has prevented this, even as regards the "Moses" fresco, to see which does not involve going near the House of Lords itself. Now, I am in no way quarrelling with the House of Lords as an institution, but I do protest against our being prevented from seeing, under proper regulations, the sumptuous and highly-decorated buildings which the nation has provided. I cannot see any better way in which the public can see these buildings than that of being introduced by their Parliamentary Representatives. When my constituents come over here I always find they take great interest in these frescoes, and, generally speaking, in the decorated apartments of the House. As long as they could be shown these places, I had no objection to pay for it. Now, however, that we are not allowed to show them during the time the House of Lords is sitting, I think we ought to be as economical as possible, and to cut down every expense of the House of Lords. After a year or two of that *régime* they might see things in a different light, and allow the old rules again to come into force. It is no doubt true that the House of Lords is visible when the House is not sitting, but visitors cannot see the buildings then under the same advantages as when both Houses are sitting. I beg to move to reduce the Vote by £2,000. If the right hon. Gentleman can inform me that the restriction will be withdrawn I will not press this Amendment; if he cannot, I must press it, and I shall also have to move Amendments on all the Votes for the House of Lords.

Motion made, and Question proposed

"That a sum, not exceeding £27,625 (reduced in respect of Access to Paintings in the House of Lords), be granted for the said Service."—(*Colonel Nolan.*)

*(8.4.) MR. PLUNKET: I think the hon. and gallant Member has moved this reduction under some misapprehension as to the facts of the case, and that when I have explained how the matter stands he will not desire to press his Amendment. It is true that some alterations were made in the rules for the admission of strangers to the House of Lords some years ago, and I promised to put myself in communication with the officials of the House of Lords on the subject. I did so, and since the last time these Estimates were before the

House an arrangement has been made by which the public are admitted to those rooms where the frescoes are at all times, except when the House of Lords is actually sitting. It is necessary to go through the Division Lobbies in order to get to the rooms. As we in this House also have a rule against the admission of strangers to the Lobbies or even to the Library while the House is sitting, I do not think we are in a position to make a representation to the House of Lords on that point. I am afraid I cannot undertake to press the House of Lords to grant a concession to the public which we do not make ourselves.

(8.7.) COLONEL NOLAN: What I want is the re-introduction of the custom that existed for 14 years, and which enabled Members to take their constituents and friends into these two rooms. I ask this not as a right but as a privilege, which used to be conceded by the House of Lords. There is no parallel whatever between our Library and these rooms, as the latter are very highly and artistically decorated. I do not approve of the rule which prevents strangers being taken to see the Library, but that, at all events, is a room for work and not for show. The argument as to the Division Lobby does not apply to the room in which the fresco of "Moses" is placed. Privy Councillors, and the eldest sons of peers, and a large number of other people, are allowed to go through the Division Lobbies of the House of Lords at present. My contention is, I think, a very reasonable one, and I do not think the Chief Commissioner of Works has given a very good argument against it. There are many sinecure offices in the House of Lords, and I have no doubt that by calling attention to them from time to time and showing them up we shall, in the end, get what I ask for.

(8.11.) MR. CONYBEARE: The right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works is quite right in the contention that it would be irrational and unfair to ask the House of Lords to permit a stream of strangers to be constantly passing through the Lobbies when they want to use them themselves. But I rise to point out that the passing of strangers through the Division Lobby of the House of Lords in order to see the frescoes is not necessary. There is another way, through the Victoria Tower and the Staircase. If I wished to show any of my constituents or friends through the gorgeous apartments in the House of Lords I should desire to show them everything, including the Great Staircase, the Princes' Robing Room, and the various chambers, not alluded to by my hon. and gallant Friend. You can get to these places by going through the Victoria Tower, and I would suggest that Members should be allowed to take their constituents or friends through the show parts of the Houses of Parliament by that route. That would do away with the objection which has been raised as to passing through the House of Lords Division Lobby. I do not know what arrangements are now made for enabling hon. Members to take visitors through the Princes' Robing Room and other show apartments in the House of Lords; but I know that a few years ago I experienced considerable difficulty in getting through, and was obliged to obtain a pass from the Lord Great Chamberlain, or some other high official. I do not ask that the general public should have greater facilities for visiting these places than they have at present; but, as far as Members of Parliament are concerned, I think the right hon. Gentleman will admit that my suggestion is a reasonable one.

*(8.15.) MR. PLUNKET: The desire of the hon. and gallant Member is that there should be access to the chamber containing the large frescoes through the Division Lobby. I should not like offhand to express my opinion as to the alternative suggested by the hon. Member for Camborne. I will communicate with the authorities of the House of Lords, with a view to see whether the suggestion can be carried out. Of course, I can give no pledge that the apartments in question will be opened at the times specified, as I have no authority in the matter.

(8.16.) MR. WADDY: I would point out that we are wandering away from the most important question. It is better that the public should not have too many facilities for seeing at least one of these frescoes. The Waterloo fresco is misleading and untrue to history, as it represents what never took place. I agree that the House of Lords ought not to be disturbed when sitting, but one room, which is not in the private portion of that House, is locked when the House is sitting, and it contains a most beautiful painting. That is the room to which we desire access.

*(8.18.) MR. PLUNKET: I am under the impression that that room is open to the public as much as possible, having regard to the purposes for which it is used. It is often occupied by the Lords' Committee on Standing Orders. However, I will investigate the matter.

COLONEL NOLAN: Does the Conference Room belong to the House of Lords?

*MR. PLUNKET: The Conference Room is under the control of the Lord Great Chamberlain.

(8.19.) MR. CONYBEARE: I understand that the right hon. Gentleman will take the suggestion I have made into consideration, and that being so, I hope my hon. and gallant Friend will not press his Amendment.

*(8.19.) MR. PLUNKET: I can give no pledge in the matter, for, as I have said, I have no authority over these apartments. I can only undertake to make a representation to the authorities of the House of Lords.

(8.20.) COLONEL NOLAN: I will not press the matter, but I would like it to be settled by the authorities of the House of Lords before the Report of this Vote. Will the right hon. Gentleman undertake that the Report of the Vote shall be postponed for two or three days—until he has had an interview with the proper officer of the House of Lords and is able to give an answer?

*(8.20.) MR. PLUNKET: I think it is rather unreasonable to exact such a pledge from me. All I can say is that I will do what I can to bring about such a solution of the question as has been suggested.

COLONEL NOLAN; I will withdraw my Motion, but I think it would be unreasonable to expect that I should not bring it up again on Report.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

Original Question put, and agreed to.

(8.21.) MR. LABOUCHERE: There has been some discussion as to a certain portion of the labourers employed in the House, and I should like the right hon. Gentleman to offer now some explanation as to the position in which they are placed. There are a number of carpet cleaners and others employed directly by the House, but there are others who are not so employed but who are supplied by a middleman, who pays them what he pleases. I know there is a Schedule of Prices, but in any case there is a middleman who gets a portion of the remuneration that, I contend, ought to go into the pockets of the labourers. There is a clerk of the works, also a foreman, both of whom are paid by the House, and surely they are enough to look after the men.

Mr. Waddy

*(8.22.) MR. PLUNKET: If the hon. Member will allow me to interrupt him I can save him the trouble of saying anything further on this subject. Under a new arrangement which has just been made the wages will be paid by the Government direct to the workmen. The arrangement has been explained to many of those hon. Members who formerly urged this point, and they express themselves perfectly satisfied with it.

(8.23.) MR. LABOUCHERE: That is satisfactory, but there is another point to which I wish to draw attention. A number of the labourers have been discharged, some because they are over 60 years of age and past work, and others because they are not strong. I have been asked by some of them to bring their case before the Committee. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works is cognisant of the grievance of these men; but I must say it seems to me a strong measure—looking at the vast amount paid by this country in pensions and superannuation allowances to people in good position—that these humble persons should be sent off without pension when they reach the age of 60, or get unfit for work.

(8.25.) MR. CONYBEARE: I should like to call the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to another matter. I see that there is an item in the Estimate for the construction of a lift in the Reporters' Gallery, and a question has been raised as to whether a lift should not be constructed for the use of the visitors to the Ladies' Gallery. I wish also to know whether the right hon. Gentleman opposite has received lately any representations as to the desirability of removing the *grille* in front of the Ladies' Gallery? I rather think, from information that has come to me lately, that the general impression amongst the lady visitors is in favour of doing away with the casement. At any rate, the matter is one deserving the attention of the right hon. Gentleman. If he has had it under his consideration he will be able to tell us the conclusion at which he has arrived. If he has not, he will be able to consider it, and tell us on Report whether he sees any chance of being able to ameliorate the position of those who listen to our Debates from the Ladies' Gallery.

*(8.27.) MR. PLUNKET: With regard to the observations of the hon. Member for Northampton, I believe that very few workmen have been discharged under the new system, but the question he has put to me has come upon me for the first time. I will undertake to consider the question of the retirement of cleaners, but must refrain from pledging myself to any particular course. The construction of a lift for the use of ladies is, I understand, impracticable, owing to the great expense it would involve, and other difficulties. With respect to the *grille* in the Ladies' Gallery, I have endeavoured to learn the views of the ladies themselves, and I have come to the conclusion that the great majority of those who frequent the gallery are against the suggested change. I am not able to scrutinise the motives of the ladies, but that certainly seems to me to be the general opinion. Reverting again to the lift question, I should be glad if I could see my way to the construction of a lift which would enable reporters to reach the Reporters' Gallery. That, however, is not possible, owing to structural difficulties. The lift it is proposed to construct is only to enable supplies to be carried to the Reporters' Gallery.

(8.30.) COLONEL NOLAN: I should be glad if the right hon. Gentleman would give me the name of the architect or engineer who has represented that there are structural difficulties in the way of the erection of a lift for the Ladies' Gallery. It is sometimes productive of good results to name gentlemen of this kind. I should, myself, think it would be possible to construct a lift which would accommodate those who use both the Ladies' and Reporters' Galleries.

MR. CONYBEARE: There is a lift which is used for the taking up of coals and other articles required for indoor purposes, and anyone who has gone up and down the ladies staircase, in the well of which that lift exists, will be satisfied that there is ample room to construct one of the new elevator lifts. In the National Liberal Club, and probably in other places with which hon. Members are acquainted, there is a small lift of the kind I have referred to. I may be told that in the case of the ladies staircase it might be necessary to sink a shaft, and that this would create a structural difficulty; but if that be so, I may remark that there are other forms of lifts which would not require the sinking of a shaft. It may also be said that the present lift is necessary for household purposes, and cannot be done away with. I do not know how that is; but, at any rate, it is not a structural difficulty such as the right hon. Gentleman has raised. I hope, therefore, that unless some very serious difficulty does exist, the right hon. Gentleman will re-consider this question, and see whether, after all, the suggestion I have made cannot be complied with.

MR. LABOUCHERE: There is a gallery at one end of this House for ladies, and another gallery at the other end for men. Both men and women have legs by which they progress, and I want to know why on earth the women are to have a lift and the men are to have none? This is an instance of the sort of proposals that will be made in this House if ever that most nefarious and abominable proposition to give ladies seats in this Assembly is affirmed. I am, however, glad that the suggestion has been made, because it is a proof to us of what we shall have to submit to if ever we admit ladies into this House as Members.

*MR. PLUNKET: I would remind the hon. Member for Camborne that when the question as to constructing lifts was asked I stated that there were structural difficulties with regard to the erection of a lift for the Reporters' Gallery which will render it almost an impossibility. But with regard to the conversion of the existing coal lift into a lift for the Ladies' Gallery, that was not so much one of structural difficulty as of the very considerable expense that must be incurred in carrying out such a proposal.

Colonel NOLAN: How much?

*Mr. PLUNKET: My adviser on these subjects is Mr. Taylor, the Surveyor, and hon. Members who know him will admit that there could not be a more competent officer to appeal to on these matters. He has given me the result of the calculations he has made, and I shall have great pleasure in showing his figures to the hon. and gallant Gentleman should he desire to see them. (8.34.)

(9.7.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I wish to call attention to an item which is down on the Estimates as follows: "Supply of oil lamps for the Committee Rooms, Lobbies, Reporters' Rooms, Residences, Ventilation Department, &c., £1,900." That is the amount for the present year. Last year it was about £2,000, and £2,000 is about the average. I would point out in connection with this item that we have recently made a large expenditure in regard to the electric light, and that there is also a large expenditure for gas. For my part I do not know where all these lamps are burnt, but I do remember that three or four years ago there was a discussion on the subject, and a promise was then made that an investigation should take place. Then it appeared that there was a contract in regard to these oil lamps, and that some person got a certain sum of money each time a lamp was lit. Gentlemen who have served on Committees upstairs will probably remember occasions on which when it became a little dark an official would come in with lamps; but it being not dark enough to necessitate the use of lamps, the Chairman or someone has waved his hand and the lamps have been put out. But then these lamps had already been lit and a charge had thus been incurred. We thought that when this matter had been submitted to the House, and an assurance given that it should be taken into consideration, an end would be put to these lamps. If hon. Members will only consider what £2,000 worth of oil for these lamps really represents, they will see that it is absolutely impossible that such a sum could be expended for such a purpose in conjunction with the electric light and the gas used in these buildings. This being so, I suppose some excellent person is deriving a huge profit from this contract, and that is why I now move a reduction of this Vote by the sum of £1,000. But in moving that Amendment I would say that I should like the right hon. Gentleman the First Commissioner of Works to give us some explanation in regard to the matter. If the right hon. Gentleman would keep some record of the actual cost of each light—I am now referring to the electric light—that record would not only be of benefit to us in this House, but also to the entire community in the Metropolis and elsewhere, because it is pretty certain that the metres used for measuring the electric light are absolutely inaccurate, one gentleman being charged £4 and another from £20 to £30 for the same number of electric lights burning the same number of hours. Therefore, if the right hon. Gentleman would keep a tally of the time these electric lamps are lit he would confer a benefit upon the general public. As to these oil lamps, I do not think the right hon. Gentleman will get up and tell me we are getting £2,000 worth of light out of the lamps. I want to know whether the contract still goes on in the same way as before; and, if so, whether the right hon. Gentleman will give us an assurance that it shall be put a stop to? If he gives me a satisfactory answer I shall not persist in moving a reduction of the Vote; but if he does not answer me satisfactorily, I shall be obliged to press my Motion.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I had almost hoped that during these small hours of the dinner time we might have escaped these criticisms of the hon. Member for Northampton, but the hon. Gentleman is like one of those Scriptural characters who always kept their lamps burning. But, with regard to the reduction the hon. Gentleman proposes to move——

Mr. LABOUCHERE: Which I have already moved.

*Mr. PLUNKET: The reduction he proposes to move if my explanation is not satisfactory, I hope I shall be enabled to relieve him from the necessity of dividing the House on this question. The fact is that hon. Members who may think the consumption of oil in these buildings is excessive and that the amount asked for is exorbitant, can hardly be conversant with the number of lamps in use in different parts of the House with which they are not acquainted. Those parts of the building in which the greatest portion of the expense is incurred are not those parts with which hon. Members are most conversant. They are the Committee Rooms and the official residences, of which there are a great number throughout these buildings, both in connection with this House and with the House of Lords. It is quite true, when my attention was called to the matter last year, I undertook to make a careful investigation of the subject, and in accordance with that promise I have very carefully gone into the question. I have a list, the particulars of which the hon. Member is welcome to peruse if he wishes it, setting forth every lamp that is used; and I may state, generally, that after a full examination I have not been able to detect any part of the House in which the number of lamps seems to me to be excessive or beyond the requirements of the place, or as to which the charges which are made are exorbitant. The hon. Member says fairly enough that there has been a considerable increase in the cost of the electric light, while the charge for gas and oil remains the same. But we have not succeeded in installing the electric light in those parts of the two Houses where oil lamps are most used. For instance, the Committee Rooms upstairs are lighted entirely by oil lamps. Again, during the recent fogs the number of lamps used in the Committee Rooms have largely exceeded the average, and this must be taken into account in framing the Estimates. The estimates of consumption which we have set out are only approximate, and are made on the assumption that there will be a Winter Session at the close of the present year; if there is not, the money will not be spent. Electric lighting, at all events in the present state of the science, is more expensive than the old system of gas and oil. A larger estimate has been made this year than would otherwise have been the case, from the fact that we have found by experience of Autumn Sessions that the consumption of gas and oil and electric light is much greater than in an ordinary year. I, for one, greatly prefer the arrangement. I would much rather, if I may use the expression, "put in" two months in the winter than two months in the summer; but it makes the lighting more expensive. For instance, one week's consumption of gas in December is as great as that of three weeks in August. Against that must be set off the increase of the electric light. I will make inquiry as to the means we have of gauging and checking the cost of the oil lamps, and I will forward to the hon. Member the information he requires.

(9.20.) MR. LABOUCHERE: The right hon. Gentleman has not answered the *gravamen* of my charge, which is, that there is a contract for oil lamps—that there is some sort of middleman who receives a sum of money each time one of these lamps is lit, whether for a long or short time. It is impossible to conceive that we spend £2,000 on oil lamps, especially when it is remembered that we do not sit for a great part of the year. Were we sitting the whole year the amount would be £3,500 for these oil lamps. The right hon. Gentleman pointed out that the electric light does not exist in the Committee Rooms. That is perfectly true. But what I was speaking of is the fact that the officials bring in lamps when they are not wanted, and that they are sent away again. Those lamps are charged for as having been lighted. I presume the lamps belong to us, and I suggest that a certain quantity of oil should be brought for them by our officials, of whom we have a large number, some of them highly paid, and then we would ascertain what this middleman gets. We are not here to subsidise middlemen; we are at home, and we ought not to permit abuses under our own noses. I would like the right hon. Gentleman to state what is the advantage of this middleman.

(9.25.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I think the right hon. Gentleman's reference to the lamps of my hon. Friend as always burning is rather out of place, because his complaint is that the lamp is not always burning. I agree with him that in this House we ought to show an example of economy. For warming and lighting this building, large though it is, £15,100 does seem an enormous expenditure. It is perfectly true that the electric light is a good deal more expensive than gas and oil, still the electric light in the Reading Room is not as efficient as it ought to be; it is very difficult to read by it; it is a hazy and indistinct light. If the electric light is to involve additional expenditure, care should be taken to economise in other directions. But I find that there is only a reduction of £100 on oil lamps. I believe there is great room for economy in the latter item, and I certainly hope the right hon. Gentleman will cause inquiry to be made, as, if we are found to be extravagant in this House, we are put out of Court in asking other people to reduce their expenditure.

*(9.28.) Mr. H. J. WILSON: It will be in the recollection of hon. Members that we often sat until 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning, yet the cost of lighting then was the same as it is now, though we rise earlier. Another point, I think, if I remember aright the Debate of four or five years ago, some of the lamps do not belong to us but to the contractor.

*(9.29.) Mr. PLUNKET: In answer to the hon. Gentleman, I have to state that during the Easter Recess certain alterations have been successfully made in the electric light in the Reading Room, and we may have a further opportunity of improving it in the long Recess. As to the contract for oil lamps, it is not a question of middlemen at all, it is a question of economy. There is great irregularity in the number of lamps used, and it was found better to pay a certain sum for each lamp lighted. It is found it is cheaper to do this business by contract than by ourselves. At present there are large numbers of lamps always at hand, and large numbers of men always available to attend to them. If we undertook the work ourselves the staff at one time might be insufficient, and at other times more than sufficient. I can assure the Committee the matter has been gone into most carefully since the last time it was brought up, and that there is really no waste.

(9.38.) Mr. J. ROWLANDS: I should think the right hon. Gentleman will welcome the advent of this vote, because in the earlier part of the evening he complained of the difficulty a Minister has to make a reduction, even if he wishes to do so. He, at least, finds there is a strong feeling on this side of the House to effect a reduction of this Vote, of however small a character. I should like to know what Minister is in his room for 14 hours, or for even the shorter period mentioned, namely, 12 hours, and requires to have a lamp burning for so long a time. Besides, the House does not generally sit at the time of year when the days are shortest. Now, for instance, it is not necessary to light lamps as early as we do in November. It is astounding to hear that in all the Ministers' rooms there are lamps now burning. In some of the rooms the electric light has been introduced. That necessarily increases the charge for electric light, and no one objects; but, at the same time, many lamps must have disappeared. There is a reduction of £100, but that does not meet the whole of the change which has taken place in the Ministers' rooms. To pay so much per day for these lamps seems a very extraordinary way of meeting the requirements. It would be interesting to know how many lamps are used and how many hours they burn. In 1884 the lamps were kept burning from 12 to 14 hours, but then that was the period of long Sittings. Was that the year when the contract price was fixed? It is clear that with the earlier rising of the House there ought to be some reduction in the contract price.

*Mr. PLUNKET: I have no objection to furnish a Return, giving, as nearly as we can, the number of the lamps used and the hours they burn.

*(9.40.) Mr. MORTON: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether the contract is ever renewed; whether, at any time, persons other than the present contractors have had an opportunity of tendering for the work? I trust, too, that the Return which the right hon. Gentleman has promised will show us how the money is spent. Perhaps the First Commissioner would allow us to see the bills sent in.

(9.41.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: I will not put the Committee to the trouble of a Division, but let me say I trust the Return will explain to us the whole system. At present it seems to some of us that a Minister is regarded as a species of saint, before whom a light is to be kept constantly burning.

*(9.42.) Mr. PLUNKET: The hon. Member may possibly, at no distant date, have an opportunity of ascertaining that it is the unfortunate fate of a Minister to be in attendance at the House of Commons 10 hours — from 3 o'clock in the afternoon to 1 o'clock in the morning. It would not do to turn out an oil lamp every time one went from one room to another.

(9.43.) Mr. CONYBEARE: It is no doubt true that Ministers are often in attendance at the House from 3 o'clock to 1 o'clock, but at this time of tho year a lamp is not lighted until, say, half-past 6. I object to the system of burning oil lamps, on account of the danger attending it. We have had a conflagration at the Palace of Westminster before now, and we may have the whole place burnt down again. We are extending the system of electric lighting, and I am glad of it. Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any idea of the length of time it will take to extend the electric light to the Committee Rooms, and to those other parts of the buildings which are usually frequented by Members? Again, I should like to know whether arrangements are made in the different rooms for switching the light on and off? [Mr. Plunket signified assent.] I am glad that is the case, because that must lead to a material saving.

(9.45.) Dr. CAMERON (Glasgow, College): Can the right hon. Gentleman give us any indication when we shall find ourselves in possession of an electric light by which we shall be able to read? I have heard innumerable complaints as to the very defective nature of the electric light supplied in various rooms in the building. No doubt it is only a matter of arrangement; possibly the substitution of 32 candle lamps for 16 candle lamps. From what I hear, and also judging from my own experience, the electric light is not by any means so pleasant as gas light. We have got rid of the heat, but we lack the light.

*(9.46.) Mr. PLUNKET: We recognised that the light in the Reading Room was defective, and during the Easter Recess we made some endeavours to improve it. It was not possible to make it entirely successful. I hope that after the summer Recess the House will find the quality of the light has been improved, and that the system has been extended to all the parts of the building with which we are most concerned.

(9.47.) Sir G. CAMPBELL: I desire to make a few remarks in regard to Westminster Hall. I very much regret to notice that there is no Vote for the restoration of Westminster Hall. I had hoped the right hon. Gentleman would ask for a moderate sum to restore the Hall by removing those abominable and disfiguring abortions which have recently been introduced. I certainly think it is necessary something should be done to restore the exterior stonework, which during the year has been reduced to a condition similar to a very irregular chess-board. At present the exterior presents the appearance of a piece of patchwork of sound and unsound stone. I know some people put the blame upon the Board of Works of William Rufus. No one can possibly believe that. It is quite clear that if the builders of William Rufus had used bad stone, Westminster Hall would not have lasted as long as it has. Does the First Commissioner of Works propose to make any provision for restoring the outside of the Hall, and will he also say when the public are to be re-admitted to the Hall?

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! That is not pertinent to the Vote.

*(9.50.) Mr. COBB: I should like to direct the attention of the right hon. Gentleman to defects in the system of warming some parts of the building. It seems to me that the telephone office is very insufficiently warmed in cold weather. The Private Bill Office is warmed by the introduction of hot air, and I am quite sure if the right hon. Gentleman has ever gone in there to speak to the gentlemen whose business is carried on there, he will be convinced, as I am, that the warmth of that room is not conducive to the health of those who have to pass their lives in it.

*(9.51.) Mr. MORTON: I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman one or two questions. I see that there is a "house allowance" of £54 4s. to the Clerk of the Works. Why is not that included in his salary, as it is really part of his salary? Then there is an allowance of £100 to the Resident Engineer. Of course, that is practically an increase

of the Resident Engineer's salary by £100 over the limit. As to the furniture, I wish to ask whether the right hon. Gentleman advertises for tenders for the furniture that is required, so that tradesmen who do that sort of work may have the opportunity of tendering?

*(9.53.) MR. PLUNKET: As to the question raised by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy (Sir G. Campbell), he will see that a sum of £1,000 is included in this Estimate for the external repair of the stonework, and no doubt that part of this will be applied to the portions of the building to which he has called attention. Fresh stone has been let into the decayed spots, and the curious thing is that it has rotted in exactly the same places as before. We have had the assistance of some of the ablest authorities on the subject, and we have really not been able to account for the very partial and occasional decay of the stone. As to the staircases, that at the southern end of the Hall has been altered, but, as far as I can gather, the general opinion is not in favour of altering the one in the centre of the Hall. The contracts for furniture are in the same position as they were before; that is to say, that we have invited a large number of the best firms to tender, and we are ready, as I stated last year, to add to the list the name of any firm which any Member wishes to suggest.

*(9.56.) MR. MORTON: As to the £100 allowed to the engineer?

MR. HOWELL (Bethnal Green, N.E.): Has the right hon. Gentleman's attention ever been called to the fact that a good deal of the decay in the stone on the face of these buildings is due to a fact which most architects ought to be able to point out in a moment, namely, that the stone is wrongly bedded. When the stone is so placed that it does not lie in its natural bed, it will almost invariably rot away in an atmosphere like that of London. I have examined a good deal of the stone in this and the adjacent buildings, and I find that in a great number of cases the stone has been face-bedded. This has, no doubt, been done in order to save expense, the pieces of stone being somewhat thin. This mistake might pass on one occasion, but I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say that he has consulted a number of architects, that a number of other pieces of stones have been inserted, and that they go in exactly the same way. It seems to me that the new pieces of stone have been inserted with the geological bed facing the atmosphere. If the right hon. Gentleman will consult some of the experts on this point I think he will find that a great deal of the stone that has rotted away has done so because it has not been rightly bedded. Such stone-setting might do very well for shoddy work in the suburbs of our great towns, but ought not to be tolerated in magnificent public buildings, like that in which this House holds its Sittings.

(10.0.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: My hon. Friend, who is a practical man, has probably suggested the proper explanation, that the rotting away of the stone is due to a want of elementary knowledge of the stone-building craft. Such a thing should never exist in connection with a great national building, however we may expect it in the shoddy building of the ordinary builder. I hope the right hon. Gentleman has been careful to get the opinion of a practical man wholly independent of the actual contractors.

*(10.1.) MR. PLUNKET: The work as a whole has been done in a manner most creditable to the contractors, and as to the decay of the stone I have consulted the best advice I could obtain.

*MR. MORTON: And as to the item of £100 for a Resident Engineer?

*MR. PLUNKET: It seems impossible to satisfy the hon. Member, who ranges over a number of small items. A considerable saving has been effected by seeking professional assistance, and this has been secured by retaining the services of this gentleman for the fee. It is a practice which obtains and works well in many large establishments.

Question put, and agreed to.

4. £46,000 to complete the sum for Admiralty, Extension of Buildings.

(10.5.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman to explain the cause of the great delay in the execution of this work? The first Vote for building was taken three years ago, and I think it was stated then that the work would be completed in two or three years, but still there is no sign of building appearing above ground. It is the fact that the money so far has been expended upon the foundations, and is there any prospect of the building now being carried on? As the right hon. Gentleman knows, I was not in favour of the plan agreed upon; but that having been decided it is surely desirable that the work should be carried out without delay.

*(10.6.) MR. PLUNKET: Yes, undoubtedly. The original delay was caused by the changes recommended by the Committee in 1887. New plans had then to be worked out, and afterwards some delay was caused by a re-arrangement suggested by the Admiralty. But since then we have been proceeding with the work as fast as we can. The contractors found enormous difficulty in getting a good foundation in the sand, a difficulty which, of course, would have had to be encountered whatever buildings were put on the site. But that difficulty has been overcome, and without any harm to the adjacent buildings; the foundations are now almost complete, and the building will be proceeded with, with as little delay as possible.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Then has the whole of the sum of £30,000 hitherto expended been used for the foundations, and will there be no further expenditure on that account?

*MR. PLUNKET: Not wholly expended on the foundations. The Estimate we originally took did not include the architect's remuneration; and there were works not included, as, for instance, it was found that in working out the plan decided upon a considerable space would be wasted which could be made extremely useful for stowage by the Admiralty, and for this purpose it has been made available. Further, a subway is being constructed between the two wings of the building.

Vote agreed to.

5. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £53,346, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, for Expenditure in respect of Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, namely, County Courts, Metropolitan Police Courts, and Sheriff Court Houses, Scotland."

(10.9.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: It will be in the recollection of the right hon. Gentleman that a couple of years ago I brought to the notice of the Government the need of a Court House at Kirkcaldy, and strong representations were made in the same direction by the Local Authorities. In the result the suggestion was favourably received by Her Majesty's Government, and the Secretary of State sent an agent to inquire into the matter, and I imagine the Government were satisfied that the need existed. The County Council of Fife have agreed to pay their share of the cost, and I thought the whole thing was settled; but, looking over the Vote, I find no provision made for this Court House, which I believe has been sanctioned. I hope the right hon. Gentleman, in the absence of any Scotch Representative of the Government, will be able to explain how this is.

*(10.10.) MR. PLUNKET: This is not a complaint of any item in the Vote, but of the absence of an item. If the hon. Member obtains for me the consent of three parties—the Treasury, the Scotch Office, and the Local Authorities—I shall have great pleasure in proposing the Vote for the Kirkcaldy Court House, and meeting his wishes; but until then, and with no such estimate before me, it is impossible for me to deal with the subject.

(10.11.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: There is no doubt whatever about the assent of the Local Authority the Fife County Council, and we understood that the Treasury had assented. In fact, I do not think the Scotch Office would have gone so far as it did go in the selection of a site unless the sanction of the Treasury had been obtained. I am not surprised that the right hon. Gentleman himself should know nothing of the question, but why is not the representative of the Scotch Department present? He might give us some information, and it might be desirable to make a Motion to report Progress to enable him to attend, for I believe he is somewhere about the building.

*MR. PLUNKET: What I wish the hon. Member to understand is that it is not the duty of the representative of the Scotch Office or any one else to be present and to give an explanation unless it concerns an item in the Votes.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: Yes, but after the processes gone through we naturally expected to find the item in the Votes. The demand is urgent, and I want to know why it is we are to wait another year. It seems to me the representative of the Scotch Office should be in his place to answer questions of this kind; he appears in support of the Government at every Division.

*(10.12.) MR. PLUNKET: If the hon. Member will put down a question on the subject my right hon. Friend no doubt will be delighted to answer it. It is unreasonable to expect the representative of the Scotch Office to be here to defend a Vote which does not appear on the Estimates.

SIR G. CAMPBELL: There are many Scotch items in these Estimates, and I shall move to report Progress if the representative of the Scotch Office does not appear.

*(10.13.) MR. COBB: There is an item of £23,000 for Metropolitan Police Courts. Can the right hon. Gentleman tell me out of what funds Police Courts not in the Metropolis are maintained?

*(10.13.) MR. PLUNKET: I presume other Courts are maintained by local funds; but the maintenance of the Metropolitan Police Courts is imposed on Parliament by statute, and so long as the statute remains in force, these charges must appear in the Estimates.

*(10.14.) MR. COBB: Then may I further ask, do the Government propose to take any steps to repeal these Acts, so that while my constituents pay for the support of their own Police Courts they may not also be required to assist in the maintenance of Metropolitan Police Courts in which they are not concerned?

(10.15.) DR. CLARK: We must renew the protest we have made in the past. Something may be said on behalf of a grant for Bow Street Police Court where other than Metropolitan Police business is conducted, and I should not object to a Vote which should recognise the general business transacted by the London Police Courts, but in all this list of Police Courts in London and its suburbs, practically speaking, it is London business which is transacted. I contend that, in the circumstances, it is only right that the Metropolis should pay for its own Police Courts no less than for its own parks. I beg to move a reduction of the Vote by £1,000 as a protest against the country being saddled with the cost of the local police business of London.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That a sum, not exceeding £52,346 (reduced in respect of the Metropolitan Police Courts), be granted for the said Service."—*(Dr. Clark.)*

*(10.17.) MR. MORTON: I think we may well demand some explanation of the existing state of things. We must, of course, stand by Acts of Parliament; but if they operate unfairly they should be altered, and it is manifestly unfair that the rest of the country should be called upon to pay for its own Police Courts and for those of London as well. I know the reply from the Metropolitan ratepayers is, you will not give us the control of our police, and so you must undertake the expenditure with the management. But this does not satisfy the rest of the ratepayers in the country, who from their rates support their own police and Police Courts. I do not suppose the Government will undertake to-night to make any alteration, but I think the time has arrived when Government should seriously take this question in hand.

(10.19.) MR. J. ROWLANDS: Hon. Members who raise a question on this particular item must know that this is only one part of a much greater question, namely, that of the re-adjustment of the whole expenses and control in connection with the Metropolitan Police, and it can only be dealt with when that greater matter is considered by the House. The Metropolis will be quite prepared to bear its proper burdens in this matter when it has the control of the police. At present the House of Commons has the control of the police, and while that state of things lasts, of course everything in connection with the police must come before the House.

(10.20.) DR. CLARK: We were formerly met with the reply that the Metropolis generally had no Local Authority; but now that there is a representative County Council, I think we should lose no opportunity of pressing this question.

(10.21.) The Committee divided :—Ayes 47; Noes 106. — (Div. List, No. 114.)

Original Question put, and agreed to.

6. £28,461, to complete the sum for Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain.

(10.31.) MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I see that £5,000 is included in this Vote for the extension of the buildings at South Kensington. The work will be of a very important character, and I think I am right in saying that the First Commissioner has invited competition for the design. I wish to ask whether, before the work is commenced, the right hon. Gentleman will lay the full estimate on the Table and will place the successful design in the Library? I think the House would desire to know what is really contemplated before it votes the money. I presume that the voting of this £5,000 would not bind the House to carry out work the estimate of which is not before us.

*(10.34.) MR. PLUNKET: This Vote does not, of course, bind the House to any further expenditure. It merely binds the House to pay the expenses of the competition.

(10.35.) SIR G. CAMPBELL: I was aware that the Natural History Museum began with the very earliest geological period, and went up to the latest developments of Nature; but I was not aware until I looked at the Votes that there was a "collection of spirits" there. I should like some explanation on that point. I should also like to hear something on the question of electric lighting in the Natural History Museum. The Government were at one time almost persuaded that the electric light was required for that museum; but, unfortunately, they were induced to think that the Bloomsbury Museum ought first to be supplied with it. Things have turned out as I predicted at the time. The British Museum at Bloomsbury is not of a popular character, and is not likely to attract people in search of light amusement in the evening. The experiment has been a failure at Bloomsbury, and I want to know whether the right hon. Gentleman will not repeat it under the much more favourable circumstances existing at the Natural History Museum, which is an institution of a much more popular and attractive character.

*(9.37.) MR. PLUNKET: The hon. Gentleman has truly said that the experiment of electric lighting at Bloomsbury has not been a success; and I should like to have some further experience before I make a similar experiment at the Natural History Museum. As to the item for spirits, it is for expenditure in connection with a room for storing specimens, which are preserved in spirits.

Vote agreed to.

7. Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £41,758, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March 1892 for Expenditure in respect of Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, and for the maintenance of certain Cemeteries Abroad."

(10.39.) COLONEL NOLAN: I see some very large items in this Vote. I have not much objection to the Vote as a general rule, because it is usually confined to £1,000 or £2,000. That is not the case on the present occasion. £17,000 is asked for in respect of buildings in Egypt. £4,000 is to be spent on Consular buildings in Smyrna, and £2,500 on similar buildings in Tangier. I do not suppose that a house was ever built in Tangier that cost as much as £2,500.

(10.40.) MR. P. STANHOPE (Wednesbury): I should like to call attention to the very large expenditure proposed to be made on the Consular buildings at Smyrna. There is an extremely extensive plot of land in connection with the old Consular House in Smyrna; and I would like to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it would not have been possible to confine the new buildings to a portion only of the land, and to sell the remainder? I do not know personally the Consul at Smyrna, but I know that Consuls in these remote places are fond of magnificent houses and are apt to send home designs of expensive Consular buildings, which, they say, are absolutely necessary for the carrying on of their duties. I do not think the duties of the Consul at Smyrna are of such a character as to require such large buildings as suggested by this Vote, and I believe the large sum of £7,000 is quite unnecessary.

*(10.43.) MR. PLUNKET: The large sums taken for Consular buildings last year, and in the present year, are principally in connection with the Corea, which has recently been opened up to our commerce. With regard to Smyrna, I have been in the Consular buildings there more than once, and I can say they are in a very bad state, owing, to a great extent, to their age and to earthquakes. It is very necessary we should have proper buildings there, owing to the fact that our trade and commerce with Smyrna have very much increased.

(10.45.) MR. LABOUCHERE: I wish to draw the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the item of £190 paid in respect of taxes for the Embassy at Berlin. Foreign Ambassadors in London pay no rates in respect of their houses, and I think there should be some reciprocity in these matters, on the principle which Prince Bismarck himself laid down. But I have risen mainly to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £17,000 for the purchase of a site for an Agency House at Cairo, upon which a sum of £30,000 is to be spent. We had this matter before us two or three years ago, but at that time the Vote somehow or other slipped through on the understanding that there should be a discussion at some later date. We have always on this side of the House protested against such lavish expenditure as is here indicated. I altogether disapprove of the policy of building these large houses for our Diplomatic Representatives, because they necessitate large salaries to maintain them. I have always maintained that our Diplomatic Service ought not to be paid more highly than that of America. The Americans get excellent men, good, sound, diplomatists—although not brought up to the business—for about half the price we pay for our diplomatists. I do not consider we gain anything by having Ambassadors and grandees of that sort. It was once urged by the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy that Ambassadors ought to have large salaries in order that they may give good dinners to Englishmen travelling abroad—as he himself had once had a dinner with an Ambassador. I sympathise with my hon. Friend, but that is no reason why we should spend £40,000 or £50,000 above the amount which is legitimately required. These festivities are only given to high and mighty gentlemen who get private recommendations to Ambassadors, or who go with the sort of circular recommendation from the Foreign Office. The hospitality is limited to persons who are in what is called "society." Nothing is gained by it, and I do not see why we should pay for it. In this particular case of Egypt, whilst we are protesting—and protesting on both sides of the House—against this system of building these very large houses, we see the Government proposing to spend £30,000 on an Agency House at Cairo. Hon. Members know very well that houses are much cheaper in Cairo than in London, so that they can form some idea as to the size of house which will be procured there for £30,000. The house we are having built will be much larger than we require, and ought to have. Besides, there are many palaces belonging to the ex-Khedive or his family which we could easily have purchased, and which it would have been much more economical to have purchased for £10,000 or £12,000 than to have gone to the expense of building a house. But I do not even believe in this buying. I believe the simplest plan is to give our Diplomatic Representative an allowance for the purpose of renting a house. Certainly this plan should be adopted in a town like Cairo, where there is not an independent Government. It may be said, however, that we exercise paramount sway there, and that we ought to show how great and magnificent a Power we are. ["Hear, hear!"] "Hear, hear," says an hon. Member; Sir, that sort of thing humbugs no one. The hon. Member himself might live in the hugest palace in Europe, but no one would think him a greater man than he is. I should think that for £500 or £600 a year you could get a sufficiently large house for our Consul General at Cairo, for, when you have built this large palace, you will find it necessary to spend £400 or £500 a year on it for the purpose of maintaining it, and then, when a new Ambassador or Consul General is sent out, he will always find that considerable alterations and repairs require to be carried out. These houses are white elephants that we take upon ourselves, which eat into us. We have again and again protested against this expenditure in Egypt. The right hon. Gentleman has defended it, and I think he will do so now, although, to my mind, it seems entirely uncalled for. I beg to move the reduction of the Vote by the sum of £17,000.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Item P, Egypt, be reduced by £17,000."—(*Mr. Labouchere.*)

*(10.54.) Mr. PLUNKET: The existing Agency House at Cairo is quite unfit for the purpose; and whatever may be said for the alternative plan of renting a house in European capitals, the argument has no application to an Eastern town like Cairo, where suitable houses do not exist. We have had the advantage of getting the ground and materials on very moderate terms from the Egyptian Government, and the proposed expenditure is an absolute necessity. Though £30,000 seems a considerable sum, it is not too large when the requirements of the case are taken into consideration. It will be an expenditure against which we shall have a set-off of about £600 a year, which is at present allowed to our Minister at Cairo for house rent. The political question, namely, as to whether or not we should have a Representative at Cairo at all, is one that I cannot deal with, but I would submit that if we are to have a Consul of the kind and of the importance of our present Consul at Cairo, there is no other course than that we have adopted.

(10.57.) Sir G. CAMPBELL: I can testify to the insufficient and unhealthy nature of the existing buildings, but I think the proposed expenditure is greater than is necessary for our permanent wants. Doubtless Cairo is different to a European capital, where you have a choice of good houses ready to your hand. In Cairo you have not a large choice, and the best proof of the necessity that exists for a new building is the fact that the family of the Consul General suffered seriously from illness through the insanitary condition of the present house. Cairo is altogether an unhealthy town, owing to the fact that the Octroi Duty, which should be expended in the improvement of its sanitary condition, is grabbed for the purpose of paying the bondholders. From the circumstances of the case, therefore, there is a good deal to be said in favour of the building of this house. I hope that some day there will be Home Rule in Egypt, and I, therefore, do not think it desirable that we should spend more than is sufficient to make provision for our Representative in Cairo when that time comes. I must support Her Majesty's Government, although I must say I think £30,000 is an exaggerated estimate.

(11.0.) Mr. LABOUCHERE: If it were intended only to expend £9,000 I should admit that that was a reasonable proposition. But I differ from the right hon. Gentleman when he supports this outlay on the ground that Cairo is an Eastern town, in which it is impossible to find a fitting residence for our Representative. I may point out that Cairo has been very much Europeanised, and there are in it many houses which, with a little expenditure, would afford ample accommodation for an English Minister. The right hon. Gentleman says that £30,000 is about the sum we ought to expend, and he has stated that we have got the site and materials for almost nothing. If that be the case, then with the money stated we shall be able to build a huge palace. Now we have at Tangier a Legation of a higher rank than that at Cairo, Tangier being, in fact, a more important place than Cairo, as the Emperor of Morocco occupies a more independent position than the Khedive of Egypt; and for the Legation at Tangier we are providing a house that is to cost £9,000, including the value of the estate; while at Cairo, on a site costing almost nothing, and with materials costing almost nothing, we are to spend £30,000 or £40,000 in building a palace out of all proportion to the relative position of the Minister who is to occupy it. What is the difference between these two Eastern towns that it should be so much more expensive to build a house in one than in the other? I think £9,000 is quite as much as ought to be expended at Cairo on this matter.

*(11.5.) Mr. SHAW LEFEVRE: Has the building of this house at Cairo been commenced? We have previously had discussions on this subject, and again and again it has been argued that this proposed outlay is excessive and unnecessary. Last year we on this Bench in

tended to support the opposition to this scheme, but my hon. Friend the Member for Northampton was caught napping, and the Vote for £9,000 was taken without opposition, although it was open to very strong objection. I understand from the First Commissioner of Works that the site has been obtained for £2,580. Now, I want to know has the work of building been actually commenced? If it is, then we cannot very well ask the Government to make any change in the plans. It seems to me, however, that £28,000 is a large sum to expend on this matter, and a sum which, had the House had an opportunity of thoroughly discussing, would not have been agreed to. I do not think it wise to have houses for Ministers on so large a scale; it only leads to unnecessary expenditure on their part. It is better that they should be housed on a somewhat more reasonable scale; and, therefore, if it is not too late, I shall vote against this large outlay.

*(11.9.) THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Sir J. FERGUSSON, Manchester, N.E.): The work has been already commenced, and an expenditure of £9,000 incurred.

*MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: Has the actual building been commenced?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: Yes, and considerable work has been done. The Committee will remember that some years ago a sum of £500 was voted for preliminary expenses connected with the providing of a new Consular residence at Cairo. For many years this matter has been strongly pressed on the Government, and the Foreign Office have been convinced that health and decency rendered it absolutely necessary to provide a new residence. If hon. Members were only aware of the state of things now existing, they would admit at once that this expenditure was absolutely necessary. In comparing Cairo with Tangier it should be remembered that at Cairo the value of land is higher and building far more costly; and at Cairo the Agency is one of very great importance. Probably there are few Missions of greater importance. A large staff must be accommodated there. The site we have secured is an extremely eligible one. The price was originally at the rate of 6f. the square mètre.

COLONEL NOLAN: How many square yards are there?

*SIR J. FERGUSSON: There are 13,000 square mètres. The Egyptian Government accepted 4f. instead of 6f., which caused a reduction in the price of £1,000. Beyond all controversy that price for the land is very low. At present the house occupied by the Consul General is held from year to year. He may be turned out at any moment, and, if he were to leave, Sir Evelyn Baring does not know of any other house in which he could accommodate himself. He has himself been put to considerable expense to maintain the house which he occupies, and his family have suffered from its extremely insanitary condition. The sum asked for will provide a sufficient and proper building for the Representative of this country. We must always have there an officer of considerable rank, and this house will be by no means too large or the cost extravagant, considering the climate and the requirements of the Mission which our Representative fills. I may point out that other Powers have not considered similar outlays excessive. The French Government have expended a large sum in a like manner at Cairo. Even if our present relations with Egypt alter, we must always have a Representative there.

(11.16.) MR. LABOUCHERE: The right hon. Gentleman the Member for Bradford stated that last year I was caught napping. I was not caught napping, but I happened to be suspended, and had I not looked on this as a personal matter, I might have pointed out that that suspension cost the country £30,000. The arguments which have been advanced by the right hon. Gentleman in support of this expenditure are those always brought forward when it is proposed to build a Minister's residence in any capital. We are always told the present house is unsatisfactory, insanitary, and too small. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has said that our Minister at Cairo cannot live in his present house in health and decency. What, then, have the right hon. Gentleman and Lord Salisbury been doing? Why have they not fulfilled their duties? The truth is, we know that pressure has long been put on the Government to build this house, and Lord Salisbury has proved more yielding than his predecessor. My complaint is that the proposed outlay is excessive, and that, seeing the site and materials have been obtained cheap, £12,000 or £13,000 would have been ample to expend for this purpose.

(11.20.) MR. LEGH (Lancashire, S.W., Newton): I should like to point out that the Minister's House at Cairo is extremely unsuitable for the purpose. I happened to be in Cairo last year; there were plenty of palaces which could be obtained, and I wondered why the Government had not endeavoured to get one. But when I inquired, it was pointed out that they would cost an enormous sum for repairs, and that it would be cheaper to build a new house. Any one who has stayed in Cairo cannot refrain from coming to the conclusion that the British Representative is housed in a disgraceful manner. There is neither ample room for the accommodation of the Staff, nor for the entertainment of British subjects who may happen to be there with the object of improving their minds, or of passing the winter in Egypt for the benefit of their health. If the hon. Member for Northampton went to Cairo, even he would expect to be entertained.

MR. LABOUCHERE: No, no.

MR. LEGH: And I am sure the hon. Member for Kirkcaldy would. The truth is that the British Representative is housed in an inadequate manner. The Representative of every other European country is enabled to make a better appearance at Cairo than our Representative, and a strong feeling is entertained that improvements in accommodation ought to have been carried out long ago.

*(11.22.) MR. MORTON: I understand the hon. Member who last spoke to argue that the house ought to be built so that the British aristocracy may be properly entertained by our Minister at Cairo. Did the hon. Member say that on behalf of the Government? Again, if £9,000 is sufficient for a house at Tangier, why is it not enough for one at Cairo? The First Commissioner has told us that there may be a political side to this question. We have been holding out to the French people a hope that we are going to give up our military occupation of Egypt. Yet, now the Government are going to put a big building there, and the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs has been careful to tell us that whatever alteration may take place in our position, we shall always have to keep a Minister of high rank there. It seems to me that that is an indication that our occupation of Egypt is to be permanent. I think we are entitled to further explanations as to the difference in the cost of building at Tangier and at Cairo. There was one other question raised by the hon. Member for Northampton as to the item for Municipal and State Taxes at Berlin.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! That is not relevant to the matter now under discussion.

*MR. MORTON: In conclusion, then, I can only say I trust the House will consent to reduce this item, on the ground that such an excessive outlay ought not to be thrown on the taxpayers of this country.

(11.27.) The Committee divided:—Ayes 51; Noes 105.—(Div. List, No. 115.)

Original Question again proposed.

*(11.36.) MR. MORTON: I now wish to ask as to the State Taxes at Berlin.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order, order! It is impossible now to go back to that item.

(11.37.) MR. P. STANHOPE: I see there is an item to cover the cost of enclosing certain land purchased by the Government at Zanzibar. Does that item indicate the intention of the Government to build a new Consulate there; and if the Vote is passed to-day shall we be told next year that we are committed to the policy of building there?

*MR. PLUNKET: Land has been acquired close to the Consulate there, and it is necessary that it should be enclosed.

(11.38.) MR. P. STANHOPE: May we take it there is no present intention of embarking on a considerable expenditure in building a new Consulate at Zanzibar?

*MR. PLUNKET: I should not like to go so far as that. No decision has yet been arrived at. Something will have to be done towards improving the existing Consulate; but I am unable to state more than that no decision has yet been arrived at.

DR. CLARK: I notice there has been a reduction in several items connected with the Consulates. I should like, however, to know why every year we have a sum put down of £120 for re-furnishing the State rooms at the Zanzibar Consulate?

(11.40.) MR. CONYBEARE: On that point I should like to know, if the rooms are re-furnished every year, could not a reasonable sum be at once laid out so as to avoid these annual charges?

DR. CLARK: I should also like to know whether, as you have handed the Ionian Islands over to Greece, it is not possible to transfer to that Government the duty of looking after and maintaining the cemeteries there?

*MR. PLUNKET: It was thought advisable that we should retain the control of the cemeteries at this and other places, and I do not believe anyone would wish a different policy to be pursued.

DR. CLARK: But in dealing with Greece you are dealing with a civilised Power, and surely there could be no harm in handing over the cemeteries as well as the Islands to her.

Question put, and agreed to.

8. £281,350, to complete the sum for Revenue Department Buildings, Great Britain.

9. £147,450, to complete the sum for Public Buildings, Great Britain.

(11.45.) DR. CLARK: On this Vote I should like to point out the desirability of steps being taken to bring all the Government Offices closer together. The present system of having them scattered all over the place is a very costly one, and it seems to me the Government might easily find, in such places, for instance, as Northumberland Avenue, sites on which Public Offices could be concentrated. Now these offices are some of them in Spring Gardens, others in Gray's Inn, and others in Queen Street. I should like to know why the First Naval Lord of the Admiralty should have an official residence when no one else in a like position has that privilege? Surely some scheme could be devised by which the present disjointed system could be abolished, and the offices concentrated in a manner which would ensure more economical working, as well as greater efficiency.

MR. JACKSON: There is great force in what the hon. Member says.

The fact is, that some of the Departments have greatly outgrown the existing accommodation. I agree it is desirable that the offices should be concentrated, and we are doing that as far as we can.

DR. CLARK: Attention has been called to this matter year after year. Cannot someone on the Treasury Bench bring forward a scheme for securing the end which is desired by all of us? If anyone had the moral courage to propose an outlay of £500,000 it would be found to be the cheaper in the long run.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: I should like to ask whether any determination has been come to with regard to the War Office? I understood that the Committee which sat three years ago to consider the extension of the Admiralty buildings were of opinion that some measures ought to be taken to bring together all the various Departments of the War Office under one roof. What arrangements are contemplated in this respect?

*(11.50.) MR. PLUNKET: The matter is still being considered, and no final decision has been arrived at.

MR. SHAW LEFEVRE: It is time some decision was come to.

MR. CONYBEARE: Is there any special reason for giving the First Naval Lord an official residence?

*MR. PLUNKET: Yes; it is deemed desirable, in the interests of the Department, that the First Naval Lord should be enabled to live close to the Admiralty, so as to be easily approached in case of emergency.

(11.52.) MR. J. ROWLANDS: It is very satisfactory to us to hear from the Secretary to the Treasury that steps are being taken for the concentration of our Public Offices, but I think we are entitled to further explanations on this point. What has been, or is being, done? It is admitted year after year that the present system is most costly, and that it is impossible for heads of Departments to maintain a thorough supervision of their respective branches. We know greater efficiency and economy would be secured if all the Departments were under one roof, and I therefore hope the Government will not lose sight of the importance of moving promptly in this matter.

*(11.53.) Mr. PLUNKET: The hon. Member is no doubt aware that several of the Government Offices have already been concentrated, and that when the Admiralty scheme is carried out and the War Office dealt with as proposed, pretty well all that is most urgent will have been done.

(11.54.) Mr. P. STANHOPE: Is it proposed to continue the present temporary office for the Agricultural Department? I think a more suitable home should be found for that Department if it is to be a permanent one.

*Mr. PLUNKET: We are making arrangements to secure suitable offices.

Vote agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed,

"That a sum, not exceeding £175,770, be granted to Her Majesty, to complete the sum necessary to defray the Charge which will come in course of payment during the year ending on the 31st day of March, 1892, for Surveying the United Kingdom, and for revising the Survey, for Maps for use in proceedings before the Land Judges in Ireland and the Irish Land Commission, publication of Maps, and engraving the Geological Survey."

*(11.57.) Mr. ROBY (Lancashire, S.E., Eccles): I wish to call the attention of the Government to the present state of the Ordnance Survey. The matter was brought up before the last meeting of the British Association, in an excellent paper by Mr. H. T. Crook, C.E., of Manchester, and the Association, I believe, decided to approach the Government on the subject. The matter is one of considerable importance. It must be obvious to any Member who has examined the question that many of the maps are entirely out of date. I know that in my own part of the country (Manchester) the maps are 30, 40, and 50 years old. No doubt, the Ordnance Survey there is being revised; but we shall have to wait years before we get the new maps. Again, there is no complete hill-shaded map on the 1in. scale of either Scotland or Ireland. This is not creditable to a scientific country. At the present rate of progress, it must be 40 years before the maps can be available for the public, and by that time much of the work will have fallen out of date. The question ought to be thoroughly gone into, and sufficient money ought to be spent in each year to bring the maps thoroughly up to the standard.

It being Midnight, the Chairman left the Chair to make his report to the House.

Resolutions to be reported to-morrow at Two of the clock.

Committee also report Progress; to sit again upon Wednesday.

ELECTORAL DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.—(No. 182.)

Considered in Committee.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow at Two of the clock.

ARMY SCHOOLS BILL.—(No. 211.)

Order for Committee read.

Ordered, That it be an Instruction to the Committee that they have power to extend the provisions of the Bill to schools for the children of Royal Marines.—(*Mr. Secretary Stanhope.*)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

(12.4.) The SECRETARY of STATE for WAR (Mr. E. Stanhope, Lincolnshire, Horncastle): I beg to move the Amendment that stands in my name.

Mr. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg, Sir, to move that you do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again. I do not wish unnecessarily to oppose this Bill after what was said by the right hon. Gentleman the other night; and, therefore, I did not object to the Instruction carried just now.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Chairman do report Progress, and ask leave to sit again."—(*Mr. Conybeare.*)

Mr. E. STANHOPE: The Amendment is only intended to widen the scope of the Bill with reference to charities which do not exactly come within the description of endowed schools.

Question put, and agreed to.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow at Two of the clock.

PRESUMPTION OF LIFE LIMITATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 248.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

(12.5.) THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. J. P. B. ROBERTSON, Bute): I beg to move the Second Reading of this Bill. The measure is much asked for in various parts of Scotland, and is substantially the one introduced some two years ago, with some alterations and improvements suggested from various quarters of the House, and especially by the hon. Member for West Edinburgh (Mr. Buchanan.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

RETURNING OFFICERS (SCOTLAND) BILL.—(No. 249.)

SECOND READING.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Bill be now read a second time."—(*The Lord Advocate.*)

(12.6.) MR. CONYBEARE (Cornwall, Camborne): I am always loth to interfere with Scotch business, and as my hon. Friend the Member for Caithness did not oppose the last Bill I did not venture to object to it. This Bill, however, is one which I think it very desirable to have extended to England, and I cannot allow it to pass now.

DR. CLARK (Caithness): My hon. Friend is aware of the character of the Bill. It is practically only a Schedule which was thrown out by the Lords. England already has a Schedule.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

MERCHANDISE MARKS PROSECUTIONS [COSTS].

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Resolved, That it is expedient to authorise the payment, out of moneys to be provided by Parliament, of the costs of prosecutions undertaken by the Board of Trade, which may be incurred under any Act of the present Session to amend "The Merchandise Marks Act, 1887."

Resolution to be reported to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

MERCHANDISE MARKS BILL.—(No. 245.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again to-morrow, at Two of the clock.

SLANDER OF WOMEN BILL.—(No. 150.)

Considered in Committee.

(In the Committee.)

Clause 1.

Committee report Progress; to sit again upon Monday next.

CHARITIES RECOVERY BLL.—(No. 247.)

Bill read a second time, and committed for Thursday.

CROFTERS' HOLDINGS (SCOTLAND) (No. 2) BILL.—(No. 78.)

Order for Second Reading read, and discharged.

Bill withdrawn.

House adjourned at a quarter after Twelve o'clock.

[INDEX.

INDEX

TO

HANSARD'S PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES,

VOLUME CCCLI.

THIRD VOLUME OF SESSION 1890-91.

EXPLANATION OF THE ABBREVIATIONS.

Bills, Read 1^{o}, 2^{o}, 3^{o}, or 1^{a}, 2^{a}, 3^{a}, Read the First, Second, or Third Time.—In Speeches, 1R., 2R., 3R., Speech delivered on the First, Second, or Third Reading.—Adj., Adjournment.—Admy., Admiralty.—Amendt., Amendment.—A., Answer.—As., Answers.—Att. Gen., Attorney General.—Ch. of Exch., Chancellor of the Exchequer.—Chf. Sec., Chief Secretary.—Cols., Colonies. — *c.*, Commons. — Com., Committee, Committed. — Con., Considered. Consideration.—Dept., Department.—Fin. Sec., Financial Secretary.—Fn. Affrs., Foreign Affairs.—*l.*, Lords.—Ld. Adv., Lord Advocate.—Obs., Observations.—P.M. Gen., Postmaster General.—Pres., President.—Pres. Bd. Ag., President of the Board of Agriculture.—Pres. Bd. Trade., President of the Board of Trade.—Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd., President of the Local Government Board. — Q., Question. — Qs., Questions. — R.P., Report Progress. — Re-com., Re-committed, Re-committal, Re-commitment.—Res., Resolution.—Sec., Secretary.—Sol. Gen., Solicitor General.—Treas., Treasury.

When in this Index a * is added to the Reading of a Bill, it indicates that no Debate took place upon that stage of the measure.

The subjects of Debate, as far as possible, are classified under "General Headings:"—*e.g.*, ARMY—NAVY—INDIA—IRELAND—SCOTLAND—WALES—PARLIAMENT—POOR LAW—POST OFFICE—METROPOLIS—CHURCH OF ENGLAND—EDUCATION—LAW AND JUSTICE AND POLICE—LABOUR, TRADE, AND COMMERCE—LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—BOARD OF AGRICULTURE—BOARD OF TRADE.

ABRAHAM, Mr. W., *Glamorgan, Rhondda*

Mines (Eight Hours) Bill, 2R. 1346

ACLAND, Mr. A. H. D., *York, W.R., Rotherham*

Teachers' Registration Bill, 2R. 576

Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 576; Con. 859

ACLAND, Mr. C. T. D., *Cornwall, Launceston*

Inland Revenue Officers—Collecting Agricultural Statistics, 426

Ordnance Survey—Publication of Maps, 1536

Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords' Amendts. con. 1451

ADMIRALTY—(*see* NAVY)

ADMIRALTY—First Lord (*see* HAMILTON, Right Hon. Lord G. F.)

ADMIRALTY—Secretary to (*see* FORWOOD, Mr. A. B.)

ADVOCATE, The Lord (*see* ROBERTSON, Right Hon. J. P. B.)

AFRICA

England and Portugal in Africa

British South Africa Company, Mozambique Company, and Manicaland, Q. Sir H. Davey; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 263

Seizure of a British Vessel by the Portuguese, Qs. Mr. Bryce, Mr. Labouchere; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 16, 1070; Qs., Obs. Earl of Kimberley, The Marquess of Salisbury *Mar* 16, 1042; Q. Dr. Cameron; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 19, 1432

(Refer also to Debate on Estimates *Mar* 16, 1043)

Africa (Central)
- *Zambesi—Mr. Johnston's Position*, Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 760

Africa (East Coast)
- *British Indian Subjects in Mozambique*, Q. Mr. A. Pease; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 746
- *Madagascar—Alleged Massacre*, Q. Mr. S. Smith; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 752

Africa (South Coast)
- *Commercial Treaties* (see title *Colonies*)
- *Limpopo River—Seizure of a British Vessel* (see Africa—*England and Portugal*)
- *Natal—Responsible Government*, Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 9, 477
- *Transvaal—South African Customs Union*, Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 12, 759

Africa (West Coast)
- *Congo River—British Traders*, Q. Mr. Whitley; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 10, 593
- *King Ja Ja*, Qs. Mr. Picton, Sir W. Foster; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 3, 25; Q. Mr. Channing; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 17, 1234

Agricultural Department (see *Board of Agriculture*)

Ainslie, Mr. W. G., *Lancashire, N. Lonsdale*
- Army—Volunteers, Grants to, 235, 1061

Akers-Douglas, Mr. A. (Patronage Secretary to the Treasury), *Kent, St. Augustine's*
- Town Holdings, Select Com., Re-appointment of, 719

Allotments
- *Ryeworth Labourers' Application*, Q. Mr. J. Collings; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 10, 594
- *Sanitary Authority Expenses*, Q. Mr. Hobhouse; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 17, 1222

America (South)
- *Chili—British Vessels*, Q. Sir T. Sutherland; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 20, 1534
- *South American and West Indian Mails*, Qs. Mr. Webster; As. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 5, 227
- *Telegraphic Communication*, Q. Mr. O. V. Morgan; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 262

America (United States)
- *American Companies in England—Insurers and Income Tax*, Q. Mr. T. Fry; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 13, 920
- *Brussels Anti-Slavery Conference—Refusal by the U.S. Senate to ratify Act*, Q. Mr. S. Buxton; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 767
- *Cattle Importation into England*, Q. Mr. Leng; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 5, 229
- *Commercial Treaties* (see title *Colonies*)
- *Copyright Act*, Q. Mr. H. Vincent; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 6, 436
- *Irish Land* (see title Ireland—*Miscellaneous*)
- *Patent Office Publications*, Q. Mr. Leng; A. The Under Home Sec. *Mar* 10, 588

Ancient Monuments Protection Act (1882) Amendment Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 20, 1540

Anglo-Portuguese Indian Treaties (see Portugal)

Armenia
- *Affairs in Erzeroum, Van, and Zeitoun*, Q. Mr. Leveson-Gower; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 230; Q. Sir J. Swinburne; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 231; Q. Mr. Bryce; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 6, 428
- (Refer also to Debates on Supply *Mar* 16, 1099)

Army
- *Auxiliary Forces*
  - *Volunteers*
    - *Battalions Proceeding to and from Regimental Camps—Time Allowance*, Q. Mr. S. Balfour; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 12, 761
    - *Grants*, Qs. Mr. Ainslie; As. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 235; *Mar* 16, 1061
    - *Volunteer Infantry*, Q. Mr. Brookfield; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 9, 470
- *Bermuda*
  - *Grenadier Guards*, Qs. Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Cobb; As. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 234
  - *Leicestershire Regiment*, Q. Sir W. Barttelot; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 17, 1236
- *Contracts*
  - *Provisions*, Q. Mr. Gray; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 10, 585
  - *Sub-Letting*, Q. Mr. S. Buxton; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 244
- *Courts Martial*, Return ordered *Mar* 23, 2168
- *Egypt*
  - *Soudan—Tokar—Military Affairs*, Q. Mr. J. Morley; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 227; Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 232; Qs. Mr. J. Morley, Mr. Labouchere; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs., The Sec. for War, The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 9, 475

[*cont.*

ARMY—*Egypt*—cont.
Statement by the First Lord of Admy., Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The First Lord of Admy. *April* 6, 1815
(Refer also to Debates on Estimates *Mar* 5, 297; *Mar* 16, 1131)

Imperial Defence Act and Army Services Expenditure, Qs. Sir W. Harcourt; As. The Sec. for War, The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 12, 761; Q. Sir W. Harcourt; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 23, 1666

India
Furlough Rules, Q. Mr. King; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 19, 1416
Magazine Rifles, Q. Mr. Marjoribanks; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 248
Manipur Disaster, Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *April* 6, 1815

Officers
Drury, Captain, Arrest of, Q. Mr. King; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 19, 1416
Privilege Leave, Q. Mr. King; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 19, 1415

Ireland
Drugs in Hospitals—Contracts, Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 19, 1438

Miscellaneous
Army Agents, Q. Mr. Hanbury; A. The Fin. Sec. for War *Mar* 6, 431; Q. Mr. Mac Neill; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 19, 1418
Crimean Veterans, Qs. Mr. Leng; As. The Fin. Sec. for War *Mar* 3, 25; *Mar* 12, 753
Discharged Soldiers—Employment at the Docks, Q. Major Rasch; A. The Sec. to Admy. *Mar* 19, 1418
Intoxicating Liquors in Recreation Rooms, Q. Mr. J. E. Ellis; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 24, 1763
Sentry Duty at Public Buildings in London, Qs. Viscount Wolmer; As. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 265; *Mar* 16, 1052

Officers
Army Service Office Corps—Colonelcies, Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 20, 1531
Baccarat Scandal, Q. Mr. Cobb; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 231
"*Mitchell* v. *Regina*," Q. Dr. Clark; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 23, 1670
Non-Commissioned Officers and the Civil Service, Q., Obs. Earl of Dundonald, Lord Dorchester, Lord Sudeley, Lord Chelmsford, Earl Brownlow *Mar* 19, 1377
Regimental and Battalion Commandant, Q. Sir H. Havelock-Allan; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 24, 1757

Ordnance and Manufacturing Department
Magazine Rifles, Q. Captain Penton; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 10, 600; Q. Mr. Jeffreys; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 16, 1053; Q. Mr. Marjoribanks; A. The [*cont.*

ARMY — *Ordnance and Manufacturing Department*—cont.
Sec. for War *Mar* 19, 1429; Address for Return *Mar* 3, 40
(See also sub-heading *India*)
Steel Forgings, Q. Mr. Mundella; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 12, 752
Stocktaking, Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 12, 759
Woolwich Arsenal
Accidents, Q. Mr. Causton; A. The Sec. for War *April* 6, 1813
Labourers' Wages, Q. Colonel Hughes; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 224

Regiments
Grenadier Guards (see sub-heading *Bermuda*)
Leicestershire (see sub-heading *Bermuda*)

Rifle Ranges, Postponed Q. Captain Penton *Mar* 10, 600; Q. Captain Penton; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 16, 1050; Q. Major Rasch; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 23, 1667; Motion for Select Com. (Mr. H. Vincent) *Mar* 19, 1512

Wales
Volunteers—Merionethshire, Q. Mr. W. P. Morgan; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 19, 1430

Army Estimates
Land Forces (153,696, of all ranks); Report * *Mar* 5, 343
£5 632,700—Pay and Allowances, Com. *Mar* 5, 297; Report *Mar* 9, 574
£100 (Supplementary)—Ordnance Factories, Com. *Mar* 16, 1176; Report * *Mar* 17, 1247

Army (Annual) Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 5, 343
Read 2° * *Mar* 9, 575
Com. *Mar* 11, 716; *Mar* 17, 1260
Read 3° and passed *Mar* 18, 1347
l. Read 1ª * *Mar* 19, 1349
Read 2ª *; Standing Orders con. and dispensed with; Com. negatived; Read 3ª * and passed *Mar* 20, 1520
Royal Assent *Mar* 24, 1812

Army (Courts Martial)
Return ordered *Mar* 23, 1682

Army (Magazine Rifle, Mark I)
Address for Return *Mar* 3, 40

Army Schools Bill
c. Com.—R.P. *April* 6, 1890

Artificial Manures and Feeding Stuffs Adulteration Bill
Postponed Q. Mr. Channing *Mar* 3, 33; Q. Mr. Channing; A. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 5, 242

Ascension Island
Address for Return *Mar* 20, 1582

Ashbourne, Lord (Lord Chancellor of Ireland)
Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill, 2R. 9, 10, 22

Assessment of Taxes (Regulation of Remuneration) Bill
c. Com. *—R.P. *Mar* 17, 1250

Atherley-Jones, Mr. L., *Durham, N.W.*
Police—Silksworth Evictions, Res. 289

Atkinson, Mr. H. J., *Boston*
Anonymous Editorial Articles, 35
Bank of England
Agreement with, 1232
Unclaimed Dividends, 24
Banking Reserves, 1059
Constantinople—Shipping Labour, 483
Joint Stock Banks, 1063, 1231, 1426
Merchant Shipping—Light Dues, 766, 1059
Newfoundland Government Loan, 766
Parliament
House of Commons—Proposed Bookstall for the Lobby, 1233
Privilege—Mr. Atkinson and the "Daily News," 266
Post Office—Re-addressed Letters, 583
Supply—Foreign Affairs, 1150

Attorney General (*see* Webster, Sir R. E.)

Attorney General for Ireland (*see* Madden, Right Hon. D. H.)

Australian Colonies
Commercial Treaties (see title *Colonies*)
Imperial Defences, Q. Sir J. Colomb; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 16, 1061
Post Office
Miscarriage of Letters, Q. Mr. Mather; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 6, 428
Telegrams, Q. Mr. H. Heaton; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 10, 599
Sydney, Admiralty Establishments at, Qs. Sir J. Colomb; As. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 23, 1676

Austro-Hungarian Railway Tariffs
Q. Mr. S. T. Evans; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 17, 1227

Baden-Powell, Sir G., *Liverpool, Kirkdale*
Navy—Royal Naval Reserve—Annual Drill, 1663
Post Office—Messenger Service, 1231

Balfour, Right Hon. A. J. (Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland), *Manchester, E.*
Ireland
Agriculture—Mortgages on Agricultural Land, 259
Belfast Pawnbroking Trade, 256
Criminal Law, &c. Act—Dillon, Mr. J. 1673
Distress—Failure of Potato Crop
Relief Works, 252, 253, 254, 264, 425, 427, 431, 434, 490, 491, 604, 778, 793 800, 815, 828, 830, 924, 1069, 1070 1437, 1671, 1764
Supply of Seed Potatoes, 430
Drainage—Bann Drainage, 488
(Refer also to sub-heading Distress—Relief Works)
Education
Ballymoney Model School, 489
Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885 (Gilson Schools), Res. 1514, 1515
Technical Instruction, 605
Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) Act, 1764
Land Commission and Land Acts
Baltinglass Union, 1436
Cork—Sale of Daniel Kelly's Farm, 1672
Kilmacthomas and Waterford Union, 926
Kiltimagh—Judicial Rents, 1673
Land Commission Rules, 37, 490
Westmeath, 1436
Land Holdings—Returns, 39
Law and Justice and Police
Police
Burke, County Inspector (*see* list of *Errata*)
Castle Island Police, 39, 258
Charges against—Constable Connell and James Curry, 261, 490, 1672
Constabulary Force Fund, 254, 1068
Quane, Miss, Case of, 40, 258
Magistracy—Jagoe, Mr. S. 261
Poor Law
Ballyshannon Union — Tenders for Printing, 251
Gweedore Union, 1439
Prisons
Belfast—Proposed Alterations, 257
Prisoners' Exercise, 1068
Railways and Tramways
Belfast Tramway Lines, 255
Ennis and Scariff Light Railway, 431
Westport and Mulranny Light Railway, 924
(Refer also to sub-heading Distress—Relief Works)
Navy Estimates — Supplementary, Navy Service, 510, 511
Supply (Supplementary)
Ireland
Constabulary Force, 1092
Light Railways, 841, 843, 844

Balfour, Mr. G. W., *Leeds, Central*
Local Taxation, Res. 951, 952

BALFOUR, Mr. J. S., *Burnley*
- Army—Volunteer Battalions, 761
- Post Office—Transmission of Single Letters by Rail, 762

Bank of England
- *Agreement with*, Q. Mr. Atkinson ; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 17, 1232
- *Unclaimed Dividends*, Q. Mr. Atkinson ; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 3, 24

BARCLAY, Mr. J. W., *Forfarshire*
- Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 411
- Midland Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 422
- Norway—Game Imports, 1227

BARNES, Mr. A., *Derbyshire, Chesterfield*
- Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1208

BARTLEY, Mr. G. C. T., *Islington, N.*
- City and South London Railway Bill, Instruction to Com. 382, 384, 416
- Metropolitan District Railway Bill, 3R. 1197
- Public Health (London) Bills, 1539
- Savings Banks Bill, 1816 ; 2R. 1248, 1257 ; Com. 1569, 1570, 1571, 1574, 1576, 1577
- South Kensington Museum — Completion Competition, 1050
- Supply
  - London and Sheerness Police Courts—Salaries, &c. 528, 529
  - Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1831, 1832, 1835, 1836
  - Superannuation and Retired Allowances, 1093, 1095
- Town Holdings—Re-appointment of Select Com. 718

BARTTELOT, Colonel Sir W. B., *Sussex, N.W.*
- Army—Bermuda—Leicestershire Regiment, 1236

BASING, Lord
- Registration of Electors Acts Amendment Bill, 2R. 898
- Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1361, 1366, 1367, 1368, 1369, 1370, 1371, 1375 ; 3R. 1525

BAUMANN, Mr. A. A., *Camberwell, Peckham*
- South Kensington and Paddington Subway Bill, Select Com. 580

BEACH, Right Hon. Sir M. E. HICKS (President of the Board of Trade), *Bristol, W.*
- Board of Trade
  - Cattle Sales—Statistics, 25

[cont.

BEACH, Right Hon. Sir M. E. Hicks—*cont.*
  - Commercial Treaties with the Colonies, 1661 ; Res. 1748, 1750
  - Game Importation from Norway, 1227
  - Projected Forth and Clyde Ship Canal, 432
  - Vessels Built for Foreigners, 245
- Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 394, 396, 397, 399, 408, 411, 413, 417, 418, 419, 421
- Lighthouses
  - Light Dues, 1059
  - Rattray Head, 1658
- Merchant Shipping
  - Removal of Wrecks, 1657
  - Shipment of Incompetent Seamen at Cardiff, 225, 1049
  - Ships
    - "Utopia"—Life Belts, 1658
    - Watertight Bulkheads — Departmental Com. 1639, 1678
- Midland Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 422, 423
- Railways
  - Austro-Hungarian Tariffs, 1227
  - Butler's Hill Accident, 589
  - Companies' Loan and Debenture Capital, 480
  - Highbury Station—Accident, 1226
  - Political Demonstrations at Stations, 1668
- Railway Rates Provisional Orders Bills, 265
- Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1442, 1444, 1445, 1446, 1449, 1450, 1455, 1456, 1457, 1459, 1460, 1469, 1472, 1494, 1495, 1498, 1505, 1546, 1549, 1554, 1558, 1560, 1567, 1767, 1768, 1769, 1771, 1772, 1773, 1781, 1792

BEADEL, Mr. W. J., *Essex, Chelmsford*
- Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1464

BEAUFOY, Mr. M. H., *Lambeth, Kennington*
- Prisons—Officials' Grievances, 595
- Tonquin—Murder of Mr. and Mrs. Keeble, 1421

BELGIUM
- *Commercial Treaties* (see title *Colonies*)

BELMORE, Earl of
- Navy—Officers—Promotion, 1025
- Ordnance Survey, Ireland, 740

BENTINCK, Right Hon. G. A. C., *Whitehaven*
- Parliament—Morning Sittings, Res. 1082

Berlin Labour Conference
- (See *Labour, Trade, and Commerce*)

Bethell, Captain G. R., *York, E.R., Holderness*
  Supply (Supplementary)—West and South Africa, 555
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1453, 1463, 1553

Bigwood, Mr. J., *Middlesex, Brentford*
  Justices of the Peace, 598

Birkbeck, Sir E., *Norfolk, E.*
  Inflammable Liquids Bill, 1760
  Merchant Shipping—Removal of Wrecks, 1657
  Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 691

Birrell, Mr. A., *Fife, W.*
  Custody of Children Bill, Com. 1509, 1510

Blundell, Colonel H. B. H., *Lancashire, S.W., Ince*
  Army Estimates—Egyptian Military Affairs, 318

Board of Agriculture—President (*see* Chaplin, Right Hon. H.)

Board of Agriculture
  Agricultural Statistics and Inland Revenue Officers, Q. Mr. C. Acland; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 6, 426
  Artificial Manures and Feeding Stuffs, Q. Postponed, Mr. Channing *Mar* 3, 33; Q. Mr. Channing; A. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 5, 242
  Cattle
    Importation into England, Q. Mr. Leng; A. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 5, 229
    Irish Cattle Trade, Qs. Dr. Tanner; As. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 10, 603
    Sales—Statistics, Q. Mr. Mahony; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 3, 25
  Dog-Muzzling in Bournemouth, Qs. Dr. Tanner; As. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 12, 763
  Forestry, Select Com., Q. Sir J. Lubbock; A. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 6, 423
  Glebe Land at Saxlingham, Q. Mr. Jeffreys; A. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 13, 921
  Glebes, Sale of, Amendt. to Motion for going into Com. of Supply *Mar* 23, 1691
  Holdings, Purchase of, Q. Mr. Esslemont; A. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 13, 921
  Hydrophobia and Sheep Worrying, Q., Obs. Lord Stanley of Alderley, The Lord Pres. Council *Mar* 12, 741
  Labourers' Union, Q. Mr. Brookfield; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 19, 1423
  (Refer also to title *Labour, Trade, and Commerce—Royal Commission on Labour*)
  Ordnance Survey
    Ireland, Q., Obs. Earl of Belmore, The Lord Pres. Council *Mar* 12, 740
    Publication of Maps, Q. Mr. C. Acland; A. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 20, 1536
    Scotland, Qs. Mr. S. Stewart, Sir G. Campbell; As. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 17, 1224

Board of Trade—President (*see* Beach, Right Hon. Sir M. E. Hicks)

Board of Trade—Secretary (*see* Balfour of Burleigh, Lord)

Board of Trade
  Cattle Sales—Statistics (see *Board of Agriculture*)
  Commercial Treaties (see title *Colonies*)
  Food and Drugs Act, Prosecutions under (see *Law and Justice and Police*)
  Joint Stock Companies, Return ordered and presented *Mar* 16, 1087
  Lighthouses
    Light Dues—Com., Postponed Q. Mr. Atkinson *Mar* 12, 766; Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 16, 1059
    Rattray Head, Q. Mr. Buchanan; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 23, 1658
  Merchant Shipping
    Merchant Ships' Mates and Petty Officers (Wages), Return ordered *Mar* 12, 777
    Removal of Wrecks, Q. Sir E. Birkbeck; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 23, 1657
    Shipment of Incompetent Seamen at Cardiff, Qs. Mr. J. Chamberlain; As. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 5, 224; *Mar* 16, 1049
    Ships
      British Ships in Foreign Trade, Return ordered *Mar* 5, 344
      Reformatory and Industrial School Ships, Res. (Admiral Field) *Mar* 23, 1723
      "*Utopia*"—*Life-Belts*, Q. Mr. Kimber; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 23, 1658
      Watertight Bulkheads, Departmental Com., Q. Sir T. Sutherland; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 23, 1669
  Patent Office Publications, Q. Mr. Leng; A. The Under Home Sec. *Mar* 10, 588
  Projected Forth and Clyde Ship Canal, Q. Mr. Johnston; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 6, 432
  Railways
    Austro-Hungarian Railway Tariffs, Q. Mr. S. T. Evans; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 17, 1227
    Butler's Hill Accident, Q. Mr. J. E. Ellis; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 10, 589
    Companies' Loan and Debenture Capital, Q. Mr. D. Thomas; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 9, 480
    Highbury Station Accident, Postponed Q. Mr. Channing *Mar* 12, 757; Q. Mr. Channing; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 17, 1225
    Midland Railway Act, 1890—*Evictions in Somer's Town*, Q. Mr. R. G. Webster; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 9, 474
    Political Demonstrations at Railway Stations—Mr. Gladstone's Visit to Hastings, Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 23, 1668
    Servants (Hours of Labour)
      Scotch Strike (see title Scotland)

[*cont.*

Board of Trade → *Servants* (*Hours of Labour*) —cont.
Select Committee, Members added to, Mar 12, 860
Transmission of Single Letters (see title Post Office)
Vessels Built for Foreigners, Q. Mr. J. Wilson (Lanark); A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 5, 244

Bolton, Mr. T. H., *St. Pancras, N.*
City and South London Railway Bill, Instruction to Com. 378, 381, 382, 384, 385
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 137, 167, 177, 182
Glebes, Sale of, Res. 1695, 1702
Local Taxation, Res. 966
Regent's Park Lake, Bathing in, 594
Supply—Superannuation and Retired Allowances, 1094
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1458, 1463, 1465, 1778, 1780

Boord, Mr. T. W., *Greenwich*
Greenwich Relics at the Royal Naval Exhibition, 1235

Borneo
Brunei, Sultan of, and Raja Brooke, Q. Mr. Norris; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 13, 915

Borrowing (Infants) Bill
l. Read 2ª and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 19, 1349

Boulnois, Mr. E., *Marylebone, E.*
London Water Supply, 1052
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1203, 1204
Southwark and Vauxhall Water Bill, 2R. 745

Bowles, Captain H. F., *Middlesex, Enfield*
Metropolitan Water Companies' Charges Bill, 2R. 195

Brabourne, Lord
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Report, 733; 3R. 1184, 1189

Bramwell, Lord
Sale of Goods Bill, 2R. 1183
Scotch Railway Strike, 371
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, 3R. 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188

Bright, Mr. J., *Manchester, S.W.*
Post Office Telegrams, 225

Brine Pumping (Compensation for Subsidence) Bill
c. Nomination of Select Com. *Mar* 11, 720

British Guiana (*see* West Indies)

British Honduras
Crown Agents, Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 13, 912
Legislative Council and the Governor, Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 13, 912

British Museum (see *Literature, Science, and Art*)

British Ships in Foreign Trades
Return ordered *Mar* 5, 344

Broadhurst, Mr. H., *Nottingham, W.*
Employers' Liability Bill, 767
Factory and Workshops Inspectors, 245
Friendly Societies, Res. 625, 626, 627
India Factory Act, Amended, 748
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1206

Brodrick, Hon. W. St. J. F. (Financial Secretary to the War Office), *Surrey, Guildford*
Army
Army Agents, 431
Crimean Veterans, 25
Army Estimates—Pay, Allowances, &c. 338

Brookfield, Mr. A. M., *Sussex, Rye*
Agricultural Labourers' Union, 1423
Army—Volunteer Infantry, 470
Law and Justice—Fire Inquests, 1425

Brownlow, Earl (Under Secretary of State for War)
Army—Non-Commissioned Officers and the Civil Service, 1388, 1390, 1392

Bruce, Lord H., *Wilts, Chippenham*
Metropolis (Shelton Street, St. Giles) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 911

Bruce, Mr. G., *Finsbury, Holborn*
Metropolis (Shelton Street, St. Giles) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 900, 906

Brunner, Mr. J. T., *Cheshire, Northwich*
Army Estimates—Pay, Allowances, &c. 338
Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 576

Brussels
Anti-Slavery Conference—Refusal of America to ratify Act, Q. Mr. S. Buxton; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 767

Bryce, Mr. J., *Aberdeen, S.*
Africa—Seizure of a British Vessel by the Portuguese, 1070
Armenia—Alleged Disturbances near Van, 429

[*cont.*

BRYCE, Mr. J.—*cont.*
- Emigrants, Consular Reports for Information of, 919
- Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, Res. 1707, 1713, 1714, 1716
- Labour Commission, 1065
- Maltese Laws, 37, 1435
- Parliament
  - Business of the House, 770, 1582, 1680
  - Morning Sittings, Res. 1085
- Scotland—Highlands and Islands Commission—Mail Service to Shetland, 1532
- Supply—Armenian Affairs, 1120, 1121, 1125

BUCHANAN, Mr. T. R., *Edinburgh, W.*
- Post Office Telegrams, Receipts for, 1430
- Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Bill, 918
- Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1257, 1571
- Scotland
  - Law and Justice — Edinburgh Sheriff Court—Excluding the Public, 914
  - Lighthouses—Rattray Head, 1658
- Supply
  - Colonial Office, 522
  - West and South Africa, 534, 541, 544

Burial Acts (England and Wales)
- *Ashton-in-Makerfield*, Q. Mr. C. Wright; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 10, 590
- *Cemetery at Hyde*, Q. Mr. Summers; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 5, 245
- *Nonconformist Funerals*, Q. Mr. W. M'Arthur; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 9, 481

BURT, Mr. T., *Morpeth*
- India—Central Provinces, Rents in, 918
- Post Office
  - Morpeth Post Office, 1055
  - Newcastle-upon-Tyne Telegraph Branch, 756

BUXTON, Mr. S. C., *Tower Hamlets, Poplar*
- Army Contracts, 244
- Brussels Act, 767
- Budget, 244
- Customs—Messengers, 36
- Factory and Workshops Bill, 243
- Government Contracts, 1538
- Public Health (London) Bills, 1539
- Supply—Scotch Education, 1216

BYRNE, Mr. G. M., *Wicklow, W.*
- Ireland — Post Office — Hacketstown and Kiltegan Mail Car, 1671

CALDWELL, Mr. J., *Glasgow, St. Rollox*
- Mail Ships Bill, Com. 1810
- Parliament—Business of the House, 1681
- Scotland
  - Education—School Children Attendance, 33, 236
  - Highlands and Islands Commission, Res. 1734, 1736
  - Law and Justice—Fiar's Court, 426

[*cont.*

CALDWELL, Mr. J.—*cont.*
- Supply
  - Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1834, 1836
  - Scotch Education, 1242

CAMERON, Dr. C., *Glasgow, College*
- Africa
  - Seizure of a British Ship by the Portuguese, 1432
- Children, Still-Born, Returns, 748
- Navy Estimates (Supplementary)—Navy Service, 518
- Parliament, Motion for Com. of Supply, 491. 492
- Post Office and the Boy Messengers Company, 1229, 1231, 1428, 1429, 1656 ; Res. 1750
- Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill, Select Com. 1684, 1685
- Scotland
  - Education—Fee-Charging Schools in Glasgow, 916
  - Explosions in Ironworks, 922, 923, 1534, 1758
  - Greenock Police Force, 1229
- Supply
  - Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1869
  - Scotch Education, 1238, 1247
  - Seizure of a British Vessel at Algiers, 1141, 1143

CAMPBELL, Sir G., *Kirkcaldy, &c.*
- Africa
  - Natal—Responsible Government, 477
  - Position of Mr. Johnston, 760
  - Transvaal—South African Customs Union, 759
- Anglo-Portuguese Indian Treaties, 916
- Army Estimates—Egypt (Military Affairs, &c.), 306, 312, 313, 334, 335, 336
- Gambling at Horse Races, 1233
- India
  - Army—Manipur Disaster, 1815
  - Factory Bill, 747, 1044, 1045
  - Opium Traffic, 746
- Newfoundland Fishery Dispute—Arbitration, 1233
- Parliament—Business of the House, Res. 931
- Scotland—Ordnance Survey, 1225
- Supply
  - Art and Science Buildings, 1877
  - Bankruptcy Department, Board of Trade, 524
  - Colonial Office—Telegrams, 519, 520
  - Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1881
  - Egyptian and African Affairs, &c., 1135, 1146, 1157, 1162, 1163, 1164
  - Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1866, 1870, 1872
  - Ireland—Light Railways, 851
  - Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, 1874, 1875
  - Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1819, 1821, 1822, 1826, 1829, 1832, 1835, 1837
  - Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1847
  - West and South Africa, 532, 534, 548

CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN, Right Hon. H., *Stirling, &c.*
Colonisation Committee's Report, 1439

CAMPERDOWN, Earl of
Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1362, 1371; 3R. 1522

CANADA
Cattle Importation, Q. Mr. Leng; A. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 5, 229
Commercial Treaties (see title *Colonies*)

CANTERBURY, Archbishop of
Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill, 2R. 202; Com. 722, 729, 731; Amendts. Reported, 1356, 1357; 3R. 1520
Royal Academy—Sending-in Days, 1519

CARMARTHEN, Marquess of, *Lambeth, Brixton*
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1299, 1303, 1313
Post Office and Boy Messengers Company, 1230, 1231

CAUSTON, Mr. R. K., *Southwark, W.*
Army—Woolwich Arsenal, 1813
Census (1891), 1064
Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1755, 1796
Electors Registration (Acceleration) Bill, Re-com. 340, 342
Inflammable Liquids Bill, 473
London Water Commission Bill, Instruction to Com. 1528, 1530
Metropolitan Water Companies' Charges Bill, 2R. 190
Parliamentary Electors—Registration, 26

Census, 1891
Q. Mr. Causton; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 16, 1064
Index to Population Tables, Q. Sir J. Lubbock; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 6, 424

Central London Railway Bill
c. Instruction to Com. *Mar* 6, 385

Certificated Teachers in Public Elementary Schools
Return ordered *Mar* 11, 640

CEYLON
Harbour Accommodation, Q. Mr. Schwann; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 24, 1759
Paddy Tax, Q. Mr. Schwann; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 19, 1427
(Refer also to Debate on Supply *Mar* 12, 1154)
Trincomalee Forts and Garrisons, Maintainance of, Q. Mr. Schwann; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 10, 600

CHAMBERLAIN, Right Hon. J., *Birmingham, W.*
Cardiff—Shipment of Incompetent Seamen, 224, 1049
Parliament—Morning Sittings, Res. 1080
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 71, 80, 81
Police—Silksworth Evictions, Res. 293, 295
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 710, 712, 713

CHANCELLOR, The Lord (*see* HALSBURY, Lord)

CHANCELLOR of the EXCHEQUER (*see* GOSCHEN, Right Hon. G. J.)

CHANNING, Mr. F. A., *Northampton, E.*
Africa—King Ja Ja, 1234
Artificial Manures and Feeding Stuffs, 34, 242
City and South London Railway Bill, Instruction to Com. 380, 385
County Council Elections, 1220
Glebes, Sale of, Res. 1697
Inflammable Liquids Bill, 1760
Labour Commission, 1236
Law and Justice—Baby Farming, 1678
Museums and Gymnasiums Bill, Con. 343
Navy Estimates (Supplementary) — Navy Services, 515
Railway Accident at Highbury Station, 757, 1225
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1562, 1768, 1775
Town Holdings Committee, 437
Vaccination
  Death from, 754
  Royal Commission—Mr. Bradlaugh's Seat 435

CHAPLIN, Right Hon. H. (President of the Board of Agriculture), *Lincolnshire, Sleaford*
Board of Agriculture
  Artificial Manures and Feeding Stuffs, 242
  Cattle
    Importation, 230
    Irish Cattle Trade, 603
  Dog-Muzzling in Bournemouth, 764
  Forestry, Select Com. on, 423
  Glebes
    Sale of, Res. 1699, 1701, 1702, 1703, 1706
    Saxlingham, 921
  Holdings, Purchase of, 922
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 421
Ordnance Survey
  Publication of Maps, 1536
  Scotland, 1225
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 693, 694, 697, 698 701

Charities' Recovery Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 13, 933
Read 2° * *April* 6, 1892

Charity Commissioners
- *Endowed Charities* (*Suffolk*), Return ordered *Mar* 24, 1766
- *Lambeth Charities*, Q. Mr. Morton; A. Mr. J. W. Lowther *Mar* 6, 424
- *St. Paul's Schools*, Q. Mr. Lawson; A. Mr. J. W. Lowther *Mar* 16, 1060; Q. Mr. Keay; A. Mr. J. W. Lowther *Mar* 19, 1422
- *Yelvertoft Educational Charity*, Q. Mr. Cobb; A. Mr. J. W. Lowther *Mar* 12, 749

CHELMSFORD, Lord
- Army—Non-Commissioned Officers and the Civil Service, 1387

CHINA
- *Chinese Pirates* (see HONG KONG)
- *Opium Traffic* (see INDIA)

Church of England
- *Bishop of Lincoln's Case*, Q. Colonel Sandys; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 10, 601
- *Burial Grounds and Cemeteries* (see title *Burial Acts*)
- *St. Margaret's Church, Westminster—Seats for Members of Parliament*, Q. Sir R. Fowler; A. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 3, 29

City and South London Railway Bill
- *c.* Read 2^{o}*, and Motion for Instruction to Com. *Mar* 6, 378

Civil Service
- *Admiralty Clerks* (see title NAVY)
- *Clerks*, Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 24, 1762
- *Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service*, Q. Mr. Picton; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 17, 1228; Res. (Mr. Bryce) *Mar* 23, 1707
- *Inspector General of Bankruptcy*, Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 20, 1533
- *Non-Commissioned Officers and the Civil Service*, Q., Obs. Earl of Dundonald, Lord Dorchester, Lord Sudeley, Lord Chelmsford, The Under Sec. for War *Mar* 19, 1377
- *Savings Banks Clerks* (see title POST OFFICE)
- *Writers*, Qs. Mr. Kelly; As. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 3, 27; *Mar* 16, 1054 (Refer also to Debates on Supply *Mar* 16, 1169)

CLARK, Dr. G. B., *Caithness*
- Army—"Mitchell *v.* Regina," 1670
- Army Estimates—Military Affairs in Egypt, 309, 335, 338
- Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1800, 1801
- Local Government, Res. 440, 446
- Mail Ships Bill, Com. 1810
- Parliament
  - Business of the House, Res. 929, 932
  - Easter Recess, Res. 1801
  - Morning Sittings, Res. 1085
  - Motion for Com. of Supply, 493
- Possession of Game Bill, 720

[*cont.*

CLARK, Dr. G. B.—*cont.*
- Public Bodies Provisional Orders Bill, 2R. 717
- Returning Officers (Scotland) Bill, 2R. 1891
- Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1575, 1578, 1580
- Scotland
  - Crofter Act (1886), Res. 1592
  - Imperial Taxation—Salaries of Secretaries of State, Res. 1801, 1809
- Supply
  - Colonial Office—Telegrams, 520, 521, 523
  - Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1886, 1887
  - Egyptian and African Affairs, 1135, 1152, 1164, 1165
  - London University, 531
  - Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, 1375, 1876
  - Public Buildings, 1887, 1888
  - Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1831, 1832, 1836
  - West and South Africa, 549, 559, 560, 563, 568
- Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1792, 1795

Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill
- *l.* Read 2^{a}, and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 5, 202
- Com. and Re-com. to Standing Com. *Mar* 12, 721
- Reported *Mar* 17, 1181; *Mar* 19, 1356
- Read 3^{a} and passed *Mar* 20, 1520

Coal Mines (see *Labour, Trade, and Commerce*)

COBB, Mr. H. P., *Warwick, S.E., Rugby*
- Army
  - Grenadier Guards, 234
  - Officers—Baccarat Scandal, 231
- Glebes, Sale of, Res. 1704
- Inflammable Liquids Bill, 472
- Labour Commission, 34
- Law and Justice
  - Contempt of Court, Imprisonment for, 1421, 1659
  - Inquests—Bedford, the Late Duke of, 235, 429, 758
  - Queen's Bench Division—Alleged Inability of one of the Judges, 486, 487
- Parish Assessments, Unequal, 1419
- Parliament—Business of the House, 771
- Post Office
  - Boy Messengers, 1428, 1655, 1656
  - Sale of Postage Stamps by Publicans, 234, 435, 752
- Supply
  - Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1870
  - Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, 1875
  - Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1842, 1845, 1848, 1849
- Yelvertoft Educational Charity, 749

COGHILL, Mr. D. H., *Newcastle-under-Lyme*
- Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1345

COLLINGS, Mr. J., *Birmingham, Bordesley*
Allotments — Ryeworth Labourers' Application, 594
Labour Commission, 34
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1625
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 651, 697, 698

COLMAN, Mr. J. J., *Norwich*
Law and Justice—Intimidation—Norwich Magistrates, 755

COLOMB, Sir J. C. R., *Tower Hamlets, Bow, &c.*
Colonies—Imperial Defences, 1061
Customs Outdoor Officers, 1430
Navy
Admiralty Establishments at Sydney, 1676
Training Squadrons, 1808
Supply
Ireland
Light Railways, 845
Relief of Distress, 801, 804

COLONIES— Secretary of State (*see* KNUTSFORD, Lord)

COLONIES—Under Secretary of State (*see* DE WORMS, Right Hon. Baron H.)

Colonies
Colonial Office Telegrams (Refer to Debate on Supply *Mar* 6, 519)
Commercial Treaties and Self-Governing Colonies, Obs. Mr. H Vincent *Mar* 17, 1288; Q. Mr. H. Vincent; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 23, 1660; Q. Mr. Watt; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 23, 1665; Res. (Mr. H. Vincent) *Mar* 23, 1744
Crown Agents, Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 13, 912
Gold and Silver Mining—Royalties, &c., Q. Mr. W. P. Morgan; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 9, 484
Imperial Defences, Q. Sir J. Colomb; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 16, 1061
Investment of Trust Funds, Q. Mr. S. Leighton; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 20, 1531
Marriages of British Subjects, Q. Mr. Woodall; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 3, 30
Pauper Emigration, Q. Mr. S. Smith; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 16, 1053
Postal Charges, Q. Sir C. Dalrymple; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1647

Colonisation
Select Com., Report *Mar* 17, 1238; Q. Mr. Campbell-Bannerman; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 19, 1439

Commercial Treaties (see *Colonies*)

COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON EDUCATION—
Lord President (see CRANBROOK, Viscount)

Vice President (*see* DYKE, Right Hon. Sir W. H.)

COMPTON, Earl, *York, W.R., Barnsley*
Metropolis (Shelton Street, St. Giles) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 904, 906, 907, 911
Post Office
Employés—Punishment of C. A. Lowe, 917
Savings Bank Clerks, 477, 1530
Telegraphs — Central Office — Sunday Duty, 479

Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 13, 1016
Read 2° * *Mar* 16, 1176
Com. *; Report *Mar* 17, 1248; Instruction to Com. on additional Res. *Mar* 17, 1248
As amended Con. *Mar* 18, 1290
Read 3° * and passed *Mar* 19, 1440
l. Read 1ª * *Mar* 19, 1349
Read 2ª *; Standing Orders con. and dispensed with; Com. negatived; Read 3ª *, and passed *Mar* 20, 1519
Royal Assent *Mar* 24, 1812

Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill
c. Read 2° *Mar* 4, 137
Com. *—R.P. *Mar* 5, 314

CONYBEARE, Mr. C. A. V., *Cornwall, Camborne*
Army Estimates—Pay, Allowances, &c. 328, 332, 335
Army Schools Bill, Com. 1890
Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1259, 1260, 1755, 1799
Electors Registration (Acceleration) Bill, Re-com. 341
India
Abdul Rasoul and other Arrests, 467, 468, 582, 583, 1047, 1048
Bombay Salt Act and Salt Tax, 250, 581, 1045
Civil Justice, Cost of, 249
Deaths, Increase of, 580, 748
Factory Act, Amended, 748
North-West Province of Oudh—Remission of Rent to State Tenants, 748, 1048
Punjab Land Revenue, 1046
Law and Justice—Poaching Case, 1066
Museums and Gymnasiums Bill, Con. 344
Post Office—Boy Messenger and District Messenger Companies, Res. 1754
Returning Officers (Scotland) Bill, 2R. 1891
Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill, Com. 572
Supply
Armenian and African Affairs, 1127, 1129, 1130, 1147, 1148
Civil Service Writers, 1172.

[*cont.*

Conybeare, Mr. C. A. V.—*cont.*
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1887
Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1857, 1859, 1860, 1862, 1869
Ireland—Light Railways, Report, 1014
London University, 530
Public Buildings, Great Britain, 1888
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1852
Treasury Chest, 571
West and South Africa, 536, 541, 542, 543, 563, 564

Cooke, Mr. C. W. R., *Newington, W.*
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 165, 166, 167
Local Taxation, Res. 983, 984

Copyright (see *Literature, Science, and Art*)

Cork, Earl of
Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill, 2R. 18, 19

County Councillors' Disabilities Removal Bill
c. 2R.; Debate adjourned *Mar* 18, 1346

County Court Sittings (England and Wales)
Return ordered *Mar* 23, 1756

County Electors Act (see *Local Government Board*)

Courtney, Right Hon. L. H. (Chairman of Committee of Ways and Means and Deputy Speaker), *Cornwall, Bodmin*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1217
Metropolitan District Railway Bill, 3R. 1198
Parliament—Standing Orders, 1647
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 130
(*Rulings as Chairman of Committees*)
Army Estimates—Pay, Allowances, &c. 306, 325, 326, 328, 329, 332, 339
Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1260, 1800
Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill, Com. 572, 573, 574
Supply
Colonial Office, 519
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1886
Ireland—Relief of Distress, 794, 799, 810, 818, 821
London and Sheerness, Police Courts, 530
London University, 531
Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1830
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1850
Vote on Account, 1129, 1141, 1145

Cowper, Earl
Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill, 2R. 5

Craig, Mr. J., *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
Public Bodies (Provisional Orders) Bill, 2R. 717, 718
Supply—Ireland—Light Railways, 855, 857; Report, 1014

Cranborne, Viscount, *Lancashire, N.E., Darwen*
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1447, 1451, 1564, 1565

Cranbrook, Viscount (Lord President of the Council)
Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill, 2R. 219
Education Code, 892, 898
Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Bill, Amendts. Reported, 577, 578
Hydrophobia and Sheep Worrrying, 744
Ireland—Ordnance Survey, 740
Technical Instruction Bill, 2R. 1036

Crawford, Mr. D., *Lanark, N.E.*
Parliament—Business of the House, 1682
Scotland
Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1663
Explosions in Iron Works, 1534
Supply—Public Accounts Committee, 1247

Cremer, Mr. W. R., *Shoreditch, Haggerston*
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1637
Supply—Civil Service Writers, 1171

Crete (*see* Turkey)

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (Valuers and Assessors)
Return ordered *Mar* 5, 221

Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) (No. 2) Bill
c. Order for 2R. read, and discharged; Bill withdrawn *April* 6, 1892

Cross, Viscount (Secretary of State for India)
East India Officers Bill, 3R. 1035
Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1360, 1362, 1367

Cust, Mr. H. J. C., *Lincolnshire, Grantham*
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 661, 693

Custody of Children Bill
c. Read 2° *Mar* 17, 1258
Com. *Mar* 18, 1347; *Mar* 19, 1508
As amended Con.; Read 3° *, and passed *Mar* 20, 1568
l. Returned from the Commons with Amendts; Amendts con. and agreed to *Mar* 20, 1527
Royal Assent *Mar* 24, 1812

Customs, Excise, and Inland Revenue
Customs
Licensing (see that title)
Messengers, Q. Mr. S. Buxton; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 3, 36
Outdoor Officers, Q. Sir J. Colomb; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 19, 1430
Inland Revenue
Fees on Probate and Letters of Administration, Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 12, 764
Income Tax, Qs. Dr. Macdonald; As. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 3, 29; *Mar* 10, 596
American Companies, Q. Mr. T. Fry; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 13, 920
Inhabited House Duty—Case of Mr. Purdy, Q. Mr. Foljambe; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 10, 592
Land Tax, Q. Mr. Provand; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 10, 592
Lodging-House Keepers, Q. Mr. Johnston; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 5, 264
Officers
Collecting Agricultural Statistics, Q. Mr. C. Acland; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 6, 426
Parish Assessments (see title *Local Government*)
Rating of Public Elementary Schools, Q. Mr. Powell; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 9, 486

Customs (Outdoor Department)
Return ordered and presented *Mar* 24, 1811

CYPRUS
Revenue—Taxation under the Turkish Tribute, Qs. Mr. S. Leighton; As. The Ch. of Exch., The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 10, 585

DALRYMPLE, Sir C., *Ipswich*
Post Office
Circulars, Type Written, 1661
Colonial Postal Charges, 1647

DALTON, Mr. J. J., *Donegal, W.*
Ireland—Distress—Relief Works, 253, 1764

DARLING, Mr. C. J., *Deptford*
Law and Justice—Royal Courts of Justice, 1537, 1538

DAVEY, Sir H., *Stockton*
Africa—British South Africa Company, 263
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 160, 177
Police—Silksworth Evictions, Res. 290
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. 1468, 1767

DEASY, Mr. J., *Mayo, W.*
Ireland
Achill Sound Bridge, 603
Distress—Relief Works, 252

DE COBAIN, Mr. E. S. W., *Belfast, E.*
Ireland
Arklow—Open-Air Preaching, 773
Belfast Pawnbroking Trade, 256
Belfast Tramway Lines, 255
Law and Justice
Alleged Assault by a Priest at Arklow, 774
Four Courts, Dublin, 257
Mr. Parnell's Meeting at Newry—Firing a Revolver, 774

DE LISLE, Mr. E. J. L. M. P., *Leicestershire, Mid*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1271
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1639
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 96, 100

DENMAN, Lord
Duration of Speeches Bill, 1037, 1041
Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill, 2R. 12
Local Government Acts of England and Scotland Repeal Bill, 2R. 721
Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act, 1890, Amendment Bill, 2R. 899

DE ROTHSCHILD, Baron F. J., *Bucks, Aylesbury*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill 2R., 1212

DE WORMS, Right Hon. Baron H. (Under Secretary of State for the Colonies), *Liverpool, East Toxteth*
Africa (South Coast)
Natal—Responsible Government, 477
Transvaal—South African Custom Union 760
Australia
Imperial Defence, 1061
Telegrams to, 599
British Honduras—Legislative Council, 912
Ceylon
Harbour Accommodation, 1759
Paddy Tax, 1427
Trincomalee—Forts and Garrison, Maintenance of, 600
Colonies
Crown Agents, 913
Marriages of British Subjects, 31
Cyprus—Taxation under the Turkish Tribute, 587
Emigrants—Consular Reports for Information, 919
Johore—Railway, Construction of, 745
Newfoundland Fishery Disputes, Papers Relating to, 491
Perak—Ex-Sultan Abdullah, 924
Singapore—Opium Trade, 1043
Supply
Colonial Office Telegrams, 520, 521, 522
Foreign Affairs, 1161, 1162, 1163, 1164 1165, 1166

[*cont.*

de Worms, Right Hon. Baron H.—*cont.*
West and South Africa, 533, 534, 540, 541, 542, 543, 547, 548, 559, 560, 564
West Indies
Commercial Treaties with United States, 1666
Jamaica Railways—American Syndicate, 588

Dillwyn, Mr. L. L., *Swansea, Town*
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1794

Directors' Liability Act (see *Law and Justice and Police*)

Distinguished Personages — Conveyancing between England and the Continent
Q. Mr. Labouchere; As. A Lord of Treas., The First Lord of Treas., The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 12, 765

Dixon-Hartland, Mr. F. D., *Middlesex, Uxbridge*
Post Office—Circulars, Type Written, 1661

Dorchester, Lord
Army—Non-Commissioned Officers and the Civil Service, 1383, 1390

Dorington, Sir J. E., *Gloucester, Tewkesbury*
Metropolitan District Railway Bill, 3R. 1198

Dowagers Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 3, 40

Drainage and Improvement of Land (Ireland) Bill
c. Com.—R.P. *Mar* 18, 1348

Duff, Mr. R. W., *Banffshire*
Navy Estimates (Supplementary) — Navy Service, 518, 519

Duncan, Mr. J. A., *Barrow-in-Furness*
Labour Commission, 35

Dundonald, Earl of
Army—Non-Commissioned Officers and the Civil Service, 1377, 1390

Dunraven, Earl of
Scotch Railway Strike, 357, 360

Duration of Speeches Bill
Obs. Lord Denman, The Prime Minister, The Lord Chancellor, Earl of Kimberley *Mar* 16, 1037

Dyke, Right Hon. Sir W. H. (Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education), *Kent, Dartford*
Education (England and Wales)
Friendly Societies—Recommendations of Select Com. 1420
Half-Timers in Factories, 751
Schools
Birkenhead Elementary, 471
Elementary Day Schools, 223
State-Aided, 223
Use of School Rooms for Public Meetings, 240
Training Colleges for Teachers—Cardiff and others, 480, 1221, 1222, 1654
Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 575; Con. 859

East India Officers Bill
l. Reported from the Standing Com. with Amendts. *Mar* 3, 1
Reported *Mar* 5, 221
Read 3ª; Amendts. made, and Bill passed *Mar* 16, 1035

Ecclesiastical Commissioners
Licences Returns, Q. Mr. Winterbotham; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 10, 601

Education—Vice President of the Committee of Council on Education (*see* Dyke, Right Hon. Sir W. H.)

Education Department (England and Wales)
Education Code—Debate (Lords) *Mar* 13, 876
Friendly Societies—Recommendations of Select Com., Q. Mr. H. Vincent; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 19, 1420
Reformatory and Industrial School Ships, Res. *Mar* 23, 1723
Rochdale, Stockport, and Oldham—Half-Timers in Factories, Qs. Mr. Picton; As. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 12, 750
(See also title *Labour, Trade, and Commerce—Factory Acts*)
Schools
Birkenhead Elementary, Q. Mr. Mundella; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 9, 471
Elementary Day Schools, Q. Mr. Rankin; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 5, 223
Public Elementary Schools, Rating of, Q. Mr. Powell; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 9, 486
St. Paul's School (see title *Charity Commissioners*)
School Rooms, Use of, for Public Meetings, Q. Mr. H. Gardner; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 5, 239
State-Aided—Number of Scholars and Teachers, Q. Mr. Leng; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 5, 223
Teachers
Elementary Public Schools (Certificated Teachers), Return ordered *Feb* 16

[*cont.*

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT—*Teachers*—cont.
read and discharged, and instead thereof *Certificated Teachers in Public Elementary Schools*, Return ordered *Mar* 11, 649
Textile Trades—Half-Timers—Returns (see title *Labour, Trade, and Commerce—Factory Acts*)
Training Colleges—Cardiff and others, Q. Mr. D. Thomas; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 9, 480; Q. Mr. Powell; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 17, 1221; Q. Mr. Talbot; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 17, 1221; Q. Sir R. Paget; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 23, 1654
Yelvertoft Educational Charity (see title *Charity Commissioners*)

Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885 (Gilson Schools)
Res. *Mar* 19, 1512

EGYPT
French Government and British Occupation of Egypt, Q. Mr. Morton; A. The First Lord of Treas. *April* 6, 1813
Soudan—Tokar Expedition—Military Affairs, Q. Mr. J. Morley; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 227; Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 232; Qs. Mr. J. Morley, Mr. Labouchere; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs., The Sec. for War, The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 9, 475; Statement, The First Lord of Admy.; Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The First Lord of Admy. *April* 6, 1815
(Refer also to Debate on *Supply*, *Mar* 5, 297; *Mar* 16, 1131)

ELCHO, Lord, *Ipswich*
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1635
Post Office—Boy Messengers, 1656

Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill
c. Com.—R.P. *Mar* 17, 1259; *Mar* 20, 1581; *Mar* 23, 1755; *Mar* 24, 1796; *April* 6, 1890

Electors Registration (Acceleration) Bill
c. Com. on Re-com.—R.P. *Mar* 5, 340
Order for Com. on Re-com. read, and Bill withdrawn *Mar* 9, 574

Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf) Bill
l. Reported from Standing Com. with Amendts. *Mar* 3, 1
Amendts. Reported *Mar* 10, 577
Read 3ª *; Amendts. made; Bill passed *Mar* 12, 740

Elementary Public Schools (Certificated Teachers)
Return ordered *Feb* 16 read and discharged, and instead thereof *Certificated Teachers in Public Elementary Schools*, Return ordered *Mar* 11, 649

ELLIS, Mr. J. E., *Nottingham, Rushcliffe*
Army—Intoxicating Liquors in Recreation Rooms, 1763
Inflammable Liquids Bill, 473, 754
Ireland—Land Commission "Rules," 37, 490
Kew Gardens—Official Guide, 24
Labour Commission, 1763
Parliament
Business of the House, 768, 1679; Res. 931
Hansard Publishing Union, 23
Public Bodies (Provisional Orders) Bill, 2R. 717
Railway Accident at Butler's Hill, 589
Supply—Colonial Office, 521
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1789

ELPHINSTONE, Lord
Gibraltar—Dock Accommodation, 1196
Navy—Officers' Promotion, 1027

Emigration and Immigration
Consular Reports for Information of Emigrants, Q. Mr. Bryce; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 13, 919
Pauper Emigration to the Colonies, Q. Mr. S. Smith; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 16, 1053

Emigration and Immigration
Return ordered and presented *Mar* 16, 1089

Employers' Liability Bill
Q. Mr. Broadhurst; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 12, 767

Endowed Charities (Suffolk)
Return ordered *Mar* 24, 1766

ESMONDE, Sir T. G., *Dublin Co., S.*
British Honduras—Legislative Council, &c. 912
Colonies—Crown Agents, 913
Ireland
Land Commission
Kilmacthomas and Waterford Union, 925
Kiltimagh—Judicial Rents, 1673
Law and Justice and Police
Constabulary Force Fund, 254, 1068
Curry, Constable, Charges against, 1672
Quane, Miss, Case of, 39, 258
Post Office—Kiltimagh Telegraph Station, 1672

ESSLEMONT, Mr. P., *Aberdeen, E.*
City and South London Railway Bill, Instruction to Com. 383, 384
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 420, 421
Holdings, Purchase of, 921
Law and Justice—Whitechapel Murder, 483

Evans, Mr. S. T., *Glamorgan, Mid.*
Austro-Hungarian Railway Tariffs, 1227
Local Government, Res. 449
Mining Accidents — Recommendations of Royal Commission, 1226
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1444, 1445, 1446, 1447, 1448, 1450, 1455, 1457, 1464, 1471, 1476, 1491, 1499, 1500, 1506, 1555, 1565, 1766, 1768, 1780, 1781, 1782, 1784, 1785, 1787, 1795
Town Holdings, Select Com., Re-appointment of, 719

Evidence Bill
l. Presented; Read 1ª * *Mar* 17, 1192

Expiring Laws Continuance Bill—Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) Act
Q. Dr. Fitzgerald; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 24, 1764

Eyre, Colonel H., *Lincolnshire, Gainsborough*
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 685

Factories (see *Labour, Trade, and Commerce*)

Factories (*Accidents Caused by Shuttles*)
Address for Return *Mar* 16, 1088

Factory and Workshops Bill
Q. Mr. S. Buxton; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 5, 243

Factory Inspectorships (*Qualification, &c.*)
Address for Return *Mar* 4, 200

Failure of the Potato Crop (*Ireland*)
Return ordered and presented *Mar* 6, 439

Farquharson, Dr. R., *Aberdeenshire, W.*
National Gallery—Annual Report, 1223
National Gallery of British Art, 596
Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill, Select Com. 1687

Farquharson, Mr. H. R., *Dorset, W.*
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1452, 1464, 1479, 1499

Ferguson, Mr. R. C. Munro, *Leith, &c.*
Scotland—Crofter Act, 1886, Res. 1583

Fergusson, Right Hon. Sir J. (Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs), *Manchester, N.E.*
Africa
England and Portugal in
British South Africa Company, 264
[*cont.*

Fergusson, Right Hon. Sir J.—*cont.*
Seizure of a British Ship by the Portuguese, 1071, 1432
Africa (East Coast)
Indian Subjects in Mozambique, 746
Madagascar—Alleged Massacre, 752
Mr. Johnston's Position, 760
Africa (West Coast)
Congo River—British Trade, 594
King Ja Ja, 25, 26, 1234
America (South)
Chili—British Vessels, 1534
Telegraphic Communication, 263
Anglo-Portuguese Indian Treaties, 916
Armenia — Erzeroum, Van, and Zeitoum Affairs, 231, 429
Army Estimates—Egyptian Military Affairs, 333
Borneo—Raja Brooke and the Sultan of Brunei, 915
Brusse's Act, 767
Chinese Pirates, 237
Colonisation Committee's Report, 1439
Egypt—Soudan and Tokar—Military Affairs, 227, 233
Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, 1228; Res. 1719
India
Age of Consent Bill, 248
Army—Manipur Disaster, 1815
Burma and China—Annexation of a Port, 1676
Deaths, Increase of, 580, 1649
Factory Act, 748
Law and Justice
Civil Justice, Cost of, 249
Sheikh Abdul Rasoul and other Arrests, 467, 468, 582
Licensing—Abkari System, Res. 1807
North-Western Provinces—Treatment of Tenants, 1640
Opium Traffic, 469, 1530, 1648
Revenue
Bombay Salt Act, 250
Salt Tax, 581
Indian Council Bill, 1648
Mail Ships Bill, 2R. 1581; Com. 1810
Marriages in British Embassies, &c. Act, 30
Newfoundland Fishery Dispute
Arbitration Board, 1233
House of Lords Bill, 1537
Supply
Armenian, Egyptian, and African Affairs, 1115, 1121, 1125, 1130, 1134, 1137, 1138, 1142, 1145, 1151
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1883, 1884
Tonquin—Murder of Mr. and Mrs. Keeble, 1421
Turkey
Constantinople—Shipping Labour, 483
Crete, Condition of, 230
Kurdish and Circassian Troops, Employment of, by the Porte, 763
Moussa Bey, 230
Nablus—English Episcopal Church, 222

FIELD, Admiral E., *Sussex, Eastbourne*
Licensing—Gosport Petty Sessions—Selling Beer to Intoxicated Persons, 32
Reformatory and Industrial School Ships, Res. 1723, 1732, 1733

Financial Relations of the Three Kingdoms
Imperial Taxation in Scotland—Salaries of Secretaries of State, Debate *Mar* 24, 1801

FINLAY, Mr. R. B., *Inverness, &c.*
Parliament—Business of the House, 1681
Savings Banks Bill, 2R. 1256
Scotch Education Code (1891), 1176

Fisheries
Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom, Return ordered and presented *Mar* 4, 137

Fishery Board (Scotland) Bill
l. Com. *, and Re-com. to Standing Com. *Mar* 5, 221
Reported from Standing Com. *Mar* 17, 1181
Amendts. Reported *Mar* 19, 1356
Read 3ª *; Amendts. made; Bill passed *Mar* 20, 1520

FITZGERALD, Dr. J. G., *Longford, S.*
Ireland—Criminal Law, &c. Act — John Dillon, M.P., 1673
Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) Act, 1764
Lunacy—Cathcart, Mrs. Mary, 433, 597, 1761
Supply—Ireland—Relief of Distress, 823

FLYNN, Mr. J. C., *Cork, N.*
Ireland
Fisheries
Castletown Fisheries—Depredations by French Fishermen, 260
Scomber and Mackerel Fishing Syndicate, 260

FOLJAMBE, Mr. C. G. S., *Nottinghamshire, Mansfield*
Inhabited House Duty, 592

FOREIGN AFFAIRS — Secretary of State (*see* SALISBURY, Marquess of)

FOREIGN AFFAIRS — Under Secretary of State (*see* FERGUSSON, Right Hon. Sir J.)

Foreign Affairs
Commercial Treaties (see *Colonies*)
Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, Q. Mr. Picton; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 17, 1228; Res. (Mr. Bryce) *Mar* 23, 1707
Marriages of British Subjects Abroad, Q. Mr. Woodall; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 3, 30

Forestry—Select Committee (see *Board of Agriculture*)

FORTESCUE, Earl
Education Code, 890

FORWOOD, Mr. A. B. (Secretary to the Admiralty), *Lancashire, Ormskirk*
Navy
Dockyard Employment, 1419
Greenwich Relics and the Royal Naval Exhibition, 1235

FOSTER, Sir B. W., *Derby, Ilkeston*
Africa—King Ja Ja, 26
Parliament—Business of the House, Res. 932
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 100, 106, 110
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 670

FOWLER, Right Hon. H. H., *Wolverhampton, E.*
County Court Sittings, 767
Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1797, 1800
Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, Res. 1717
Joint Stock Banks, 1062
Local Taxation, Res. 1008, 1012
Parliament
Business of the House, 1681; Res. 930
Morning Sittings, Res. 1083
Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill Select Com. 1686, 1687
Supply
Civil Service Writers, 1166
Colonial Office, 522, 523
Ireland—Constabulary Force, 1090
London and Sheerness Police Courts, 527
Superannuation and Retired Allowances 1093

FOWLER, Sir R. N., *London*
Law and Justice—Prisoners Awaiting Trial, 28, 39
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1608, 1609
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 113
St. Margaret's Church, Westminster—Seats for Members of Parliament, 29

FRANCE
British Occupation of Egypt, Q. Mr. Morton; A. The First Lord of Treas. *April* 6, 1813
Depredations by Fishermen, Q. Mr. Flynn; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 5, 260
Newfoundland Fishery Rights, &c. (see tit NEWFOUNDLAND)

FRASER-MACKINTOSH, Mr. C., *Inverness-shire*
Scotland—Crofter Act, 1886, Res. 1585

Friendly Societies
Motion, Mr. H. Vincent *Mar* 10, 606
Select Committee's Recommendation, Q. Mr. H. Vincent; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 19, 1420; Q. Mr. H. Vincent; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 19, 1422

FRY, Mr. L., *Bristol, N.*
Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill, 925

FRY, Mr. T., *Darlington*
Income Tax—Insurers in American Companies, 920
Ireland—Distress—Relief Works, 252, 253
London Water (Meter) Bill, 2R. 197
Metropolitan Water Companies' Charges Bill, 2R. 192
Supply
  Ireland—Relief of Distress, 800

GARDNER, Mr. H., *Essex, Saffron Walden*
Education—Schoolrooms and Public Meetings, 239
Parliament
  Business of the House, 266, 771; Res. 928, 929, 931
  Easter Recess, 265
Poor Law — Distress for Union Relief, 1431
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 679, 680
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1445, 1447, 1450, 1487, 1502, 1503, 1508, 1559, 1560

GEDGE, Mr. S., *Stockport*
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 159, 160
Local Taxation, Res. 972, 974, 975
Parliament—Morning Sittings, Res. 1084
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1447, 1450, 1469, 1471, 1503, 1774, 1792

GERMANY
Berlin Labour Conference (see *Labour, Trade, and Commerce*)
Zollverein—Commercial Treaties (see *Colonies*)

GIBRALTAR
Dock Accommodation, Q., Obs. Viscount Sidmouth, Lord Elphinstone *Mar* 17, 1193; Q. Admiral Mayne; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 23, 1677

GLADSTONE, Right Hon. W. E., *Edinburgh, Mid Lothian*
Local Taxation, Res. 934
Newfoundland Fishery Disputes—House of Lords Bill, 1673
Parliament
  Business of the House, 768, 770, 1682
  Morning Sittings, Res. 1078
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 62, 63, 65, 66, 124
Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill, Select Com. 1689

GLADSTONE, Mr. H. J., *Leeds, W.*
Food and Drugs Act, Prosecutions under—"Police *v.* Cannon," 757

Glebe Lands (see *Board of Agriculture*)

GOLDSMID, Sir J., *St. Pancras, S.*
Metropolis (Shelton Street, St. Giles) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 908
Parliament—Private Bill Fees, 261, 762
Supply—Portugal and England, 1154

GORST, Right Hon. Sir J. E. (Under Secretary of State for India), *Chatham*
India
  Army
    Arrest of Captain Drury, 1416
    Furlough Rules, 1417
    Officers' Privilege Leave, 1415
  Bombay Salt Tax, 1046
  Central and North-West Provinces, Rents in, 918, 1049
  Deaths, Increase of, 1049
  Factory Bill, 1044
  Law and Justice—Abdul Rasoul, 1048
  Opium Traffic, 747
  Punjab Land Revenue, 1047

GOSCHEN, Right Hon. G. J. (Chancellor of the Exchequer), *St. George's, Hanover Square*
Army and Navy Services — Expenditure Return, 761
Art Gallery at South Kensington, 1424
Bank of England
  Agreement with, 1232
  Unclaimed Dividends, 24
Budget, 244
Colonial Stock—Investment of Trust Funds, 1531
Customs and Inland Revenue
  Customs Outdoor Officers, 1430
  Fees on Probates and Letters of Administration, 764
  Income Tax, 29, 596, 920
  Inhabited House Duty—Case of Mr. Purdy, 592
  Land Tax, 592
  Lodging House Keepers' Assessment, 264
Cyprus—Taxation under the Turkish Tribute, 586, 587
Friendly Societies — Select Com. Recommendation, 1422
Imperial Defence Act, Expenditure under, 1667
Joint Stock Banks, 1062, 1232, 1426
Local Loans Fund, 1652
Local Taxation, Res. 947, 990, 991, 995, 996, 997, 998, 1001, 1002, 1012
National Provident Insurance—Select Com. Recommendations, 1422
Navy Estimates (Supplementary) — Navy Service, 500, 501, 504, 505, 508, 513, 514
Newfoundland Government Loan, 766
Savings Banks—Reserves, 1059

[*cont.*

Goschen, Right Hon. G. J.—*cont.*
Savings Banks Bill, 2R. 1257, 1258; Com. 1569, 1570, 1571, 1574, 1575, 1576, 1580
Scotland—Highlands and Islands Commission—Mail Service to Shetland, 1533
Supply
Ireland—Constabulary Force, 1090, 1092
Superannuation and Retired Allowances, 1093
West and South Africa, 561, 563, 564

Gourley, Mr. E. T., *Sunderland*
Police—Silksworth Evictions, 1058

Government Contracts
Resolutions of the House of Commons, Q. Mr. S. Buxton; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 20, 1538
(See also Army—*Contracts*)

Government Department Securities
Colonial Inscribed Stock, Q. Mr. S. Leighton; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 20, 1531

Granby, Marquess of, *Leicestershire, Melton*
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 685

Gray, Mr. C. W., *Essex, Maldon*
Army Contracts—Provisions, 585
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 188, 189
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 418, 419
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1446, 1449, 1450, 1457, 1471, 1485, 1487, 1542, 1551, 1564, 1766, 1769, 1772, 1773

Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill
c. Read 2° *Mar* 6, 386
Ordered to be referred to a Joint Com. of Lords and Commons *Mar* 6, 423
l. Message received *Mar* 9, 457
Message con. and agreed to, and communicated to Commons *Mar* 10, 577, 605
c. Select Com. of Lords and Commons ordered, and Petitions, &c. ordered, and Message sent to the Lords *Mar* 16, 1042; Report *Mar* 20, 1582

Grey, Sir E., *Northumberland, Berwick*
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 83

Grimston, Viscount, *Herts., St. Alban's*
Post Office and the Boy Messengers Company, 1230, 1427, 1429

Grimthorpe, Lord
Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill, 2R. 217, 219; Com. 722, 723, 725, 726, 728, 730, 731; Report, 1357

Grotrian, Mr. F. B., *Hull, E.*
Friendly Societies, Res. 648
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 416

Halsbury, Lord (Lord Chancellor)
Duration of Speeches Bill, 1041
Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill, 2R. 13, 14
Technical Instruction Bill, 3R, 1522
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Amendts. Reported, 736; 3R. 1186, 1187; Commons Amendts. con. 1646

Halsey, Mr. T. F., *Herts., Watford*
Metropolis Water Supply Bill, 2R. 199

Hambro, Colonel C. J. T., *Dorset, South*
South Kensington Subway, 1220

Hamilton, Right Hon. Lord G. F. (First Lord of the Admiralty), *Middlesex, Ealing*
Army (Annual) Bill, Com. 717; 3R. 1347
Navy
Admiralty Clerks, 28, 1655
Australia—Admiralty Establishments at Sydney, 1676
Docks
Gibraltar, 1677
Labourers' Pay, 37, 1679
Egypt—Tokar Expedition—Ships in the Red Sea, 477, 1815
Ireland
Cruisers at Bantry—Depredations by French Fishermen, 260
Scomber and Mackerel Fishing Syndicate, 260
Miscellaneous
Distinguished Personages — Conveyancing between England and the Continent, 766
Marines, Annual Cost of, 483
Marriages on Board Ship, 31
Naval Police, 1677
Naval Defence Act (1889), Expenditure under, 243
Newfoundland—War Ships off the Coast, 1762
Officers
Captains and Commanders of Ships—Full Pay, 32
Senior Store Officers of Naval Guns, 31
Uniforms, 759
Royal Naval Reserve—Annual Drill, 1664
Training Squadrons, 1808
Navy Estimates (Supplementary) — Navy Service, 494, 516, 518, 519

Hamley, General Sir E. B., *Birkenhead*
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1342

Hanbury, Mr. R. W., *Preston*
Army Agents, 431
City and South London Railway Bill, Instruction to Com. 381, 384, 385

Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (see *Parliament—Miscellaneous*)

HARCOURT, Right Hon. Sir W. G. V., *Derby*
  Army and Navy Services—Expenditure Returns, 761
  Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 189
  Imperial Defence Act, 1666
  Local Taxation, Res. 936, 990, 998
  Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1218
  Navy Estimates (Supplementary)—Navy Service, 496, 500, 501, 506, 509, 513, 514, 515
  Parliament—Business of the House, 771, 1435 ; Res. 930, 931
  Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 81
  Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 704, 712, 715
  Supply — London and Sheerness — Police Courts, Salaries, &c. 526, 529, 530
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. 1440, 1445, 1454, 1455, 1457, 1458, 1465, 1468, 1470, 1471, 1472, 1482, 1492, 1495, 1496, 1497, 1500, 1506, 1543, 1544

Hares Preservation Bill
c. Read 1° * *Mar* 6, 439

HARRINGTON, Mr. E., *Kerry, W.*
  Ireland—Police—Constabulary Force Fund, 772

HARRISON, Mr. H., *Tipperary, Mid.*
  Ireland—Distress in Donegal, 264

HARROWBY, Earl of
  Education Code, 874, 898
  Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1366, 1372

HAVELOCK-ALLAN, Lieutenant - General Sir H. M., *Durham, S.E.*
  Army—Officers—Regimental and Battalion Commandant, 1757

HEATON, Mr. J. H., *Canterbury*
  Post Office — Australia—Telegrams, 599
  Supply—Colonial Office, 522, 524

HENEAGE, Right Hon. E., *Great Grimsby*
  Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 103, 106

HENNESSY, Sir J. POPE, *Kilkenny, N.*
  Army (Annual) Bill, Com. 717 ; 3R. 1347, 1348
  Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, Res. 1718
  India and China, 1679
  Ireland
    Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885 (Gilson Schools), Res. 1515
  Navy—Marines, Annual Cost of, 482

[cont.

HENNESSY, Sir J. POPE—*cont.*
  Newfoundland Fishery Disputes—House of Lords Bill, 1536
  Supply
    African Affairs, 563, 1145
    Ireland
      Light Railways, 847
      Relief of Distress, 798, 799

HENNIKER, Lord
  Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1376 ; 3R. 1524, 1525

HERMON-HODGE, Mr. R. T., *Lancashire, Accrington*
  Metropolitan Water Bill, 265

Herring Branding (Northumberland) Bill
c. Ordered ; Read 1° * *Mar* 3, 40

HERSCHELL, Lord
  Borrowing (Infants) Bill, 2R. 1349, 1355, 1356
  Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill, 2R. 219 ; Com. 723, 725, 726, 728, 730, 731 ; Report, 1357
  St. Margaret's, Leicester, Select Vestry Bill, 2R. 861, 875
  Sale of Goods Bill, 2R. 1181, 1183, 1184
  Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1362, 1364, 1365, 1366, 1371, 1374 ; 3R. 1524, 1525
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Amendts. Reported, 738, 739 ; 3R. 1185, 1187, 1188, 1190

HILL, Mr. A. S., *Staffordshire, Kingswinford*
  Newfoundland Fishery Disputes
    House of Lords Bill, 1536, 1673, 1675
    Papers Relating to, 491
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1778

HOARE, Mr. E. B., *Hampstead*
  Savings Banks Bill, 2R. 1252 ; Com. 1577

HOBHOUSE, Lord
  St. Margaret's, Leicester, Select Vestry Bill, 2R. 865, 874
  Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1364, 1372 1373 ; 3R. 1523

HOBHOUSE, Mr. H., *Somerset, E.*
  Allotments—Sanitary Authority Expenses, 1222
  Local Government Board—Main Roads and County Bridges, 1222
  Post Office—Parcels with Money in, 1659
  Technical Instruction Bill, Con. 858, 859

HOLLOWAY, Mr. G., *Gloucestershire, Stroud*
  Friendly Societies, Res. 643

HOME DEPARTMENT, Secretary of State (*see* MATTHEWS, Right Hon. H.)

HOME DEPARTMENT, Under Secretary of State (*see* WORTLEY, Mr. C. B. Stuart)

HONDURAS, BRITISH
(See BRITISH HONDURAS)

HONG KONG
Chinese Pirates, Q. Mr. Marjoribanks; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 237

HOWARD, Mr. J., *Middlesex, Tottenham*
Middlesex Magistrates, 438
Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act, 1884, 436

HOWELL, Mr. G., *Bethnal Green, N.E.*
Labour Commission, 1763, 1814
Navy—Dockyard Workmen's Wages, 37
Newfoundland Fishery Disputes — War Vessels off the Coast, 1760
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 50
Savings Banks Bill, 2R. 1253, 1258; Com. 1568, 1572
Supply—Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1871

HOWORTH, Mr. H. H., *Salford, S.*
Ireland—Relief Works, 1070
Parliament—Business of the House, 768
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 52

HOZIER, Mr. J. H. C., *Lanarkshire, S.*
Scotch Education Code, 1177

HUGHES, Colonel E., *Woolwich*
Army—Woolwich Arsenal—Labourers, 224
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 187
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1344
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 107
Supply—Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1851

HUNT, Mr. F. S., *Marylebone, W.*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1216
Post Office—Savings Banks—Officers and Clerks, 1758

HUNTER, Mr. W. A., *Aberdeen, N.*
Friendly Societies, Res. 640
Parliament—Business of the House, 1434
Supply — Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1833

Immigration (see *Emigration*)

Imperial Taxation (see *Customs and Inland Revenue*)

INDIA—Secretary of State (*see* CROSS, Viscount)

INDIA—Under Secretary of State (*see* GORST, Right Hon. Sir J. E.)

INDIA
Africa—Indian Subjects in Africa, Q. Mr. A. Pease; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 746
Age of Consent Bill, Qs. Mr. Keay, Mr. Picton, Mr. S. Smith; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 247
Agriculture
Central and North-West Provinces—Treatment of Tenants, Qs. Mr. Conybeare; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 748; Q. Mr. Burt; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 13, 918; Q. Mr. Conybeare; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 16, 1048; Q. Mr. Schwann; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 23, 1649
Indigo Cultivation, Address for Return *Mar* 16, 1089
Anglo-Portuguese Indian Treaties, Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 13, 916
Army
Captain Drury, Arrest of, Q. Mr. King; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 19, 1416
Furlough Rules, Q. Mr. King; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 19, 1416
Magazine Rifles, Q. Mr. Marjoribanks; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 248
Manipur Disaster, Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *April* 6, 1815
Officers' Privilege Leave, Q. Mr. King; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 19, 1415
Trincomalee—Forts and Garrison—Expenses of Maintaining, Q. Mr. Schwann; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 10, 600
Burma
China and the Annexation of a Port of Burma, Q. Sir J. P. Hennessy; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 23, 1670
Opium Trade (see sub-heading *Opium Traffic*)
Factory Act Amendment Bill, Qs. Sir G. Campbell; As. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 10, 1044; Qs. Sir G. Campbell; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 12, 747; Qs. Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Conybeare; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 748
Finance
Punjab Land Revenue, Q. Mr. Conybeare; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 16, 1046
Salt Tax—Bombay Salt Act, &c., Q. Mr. Conybeare; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 250; Qs. Mr. Conybeare, Mr. MacNeill; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 10, 581; Qs. Mr. Conybeare; As. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 16, 1045

[*cont.*

INDIA—*cont.*
Law and Justice
Arrest of Captain Drury (see sub-heading *Army*)
Civil Justice, Cost of, Q. Mr. Conybeare; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 249
Sheikh Abdul Rasoul and other Arrests—Regulation III. *of* 1818, *&c.*, Qs. Mr. Conybeare; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 9, 467; *Mar* 10, 582; Qs. Mr. Conybeare; As. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 16, 1047
Licensing
Abkari System, Debate *Mar* 24, 806
Manipur (see sub-heading *Army*)
Miscellaneous
Deaths, Increase of, Qs. Mr. Conybeare; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 10, 580; *Mar* 12, 748; Q. Mr. Conybeare; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 16, 1048
Opium Traffic—India—China, Q. Mr. S. Smith; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 9, 469; Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Under Sec. for India *Mar* 12, 746; Q. Mr. H. J. Wilson; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 20, 1530; Q. Mr. Schwann; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 23, 1648
Perak
Ex-Sultan Abdullah, Q. Mr. F. S. Stevenson; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 13, 924
Address for Return *Mar* 16, 1089

Indian Councils Bill
Q. Mr. Keay; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 20, 1531; Qs. Mr. Montagu; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 23, 1647

Inflammable Liquids Bill
Q. Mr. Kimber; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 5, 229; Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 5, 240; Qs. Mr. Cobb, Mr. J. E. Ellis, Mr. Causton, Mr. J. Rowlands, Mr. Kimber; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 9, 472; Q. Mr. Stephens; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 10, 599; Q. Mr. J. E. Ellis; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 12, 754; Q. Sir A. Rollit; A. The Under Home Sec. *Mar* 13, 923; Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1664; Qs. Mr. Channing, Sir E. Birkbeck; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 24, 1760

Inhabited House Duty (see *Customs and Inland Revenue*)

Inland Revenue (see *Customs and Inland Revenue*)

IRELAND
Agriculture
Cattle Trade, Qs. Dr. Tanner; As. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 10, 603; Q. Mr. Mahony; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 3, 25
Mortgages on Land, Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 259

[*cont.*

IRELAND—*cont.*
Army
Drugs Contract, Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 19, 1438
Criminal Law Procedure Act
Dillon, Mr. John, Q. Dr. Fitzgerald; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 23, 1673
Distress—Failure of Potato Crop
Potato Crop, 1890, Return ordered and presented *Mar* 6, 439
Relief of, 1891, Return ordered and presented *Mar* 6, 439
Relief Works, Qs. Mr. Deasy, Mr. T. Fry, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Dalton; As. The Chief Sec. *Mar* 5, 252; Q. Mr. Harrison; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 264; Qs. Dr. Tanner; As. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 6, 425, 427, 430, 431, 434; Q. Colonel Nolan; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 6, 434; Q. Dr. Tanner; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 9, 490; Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 10, 604; Q. Dr. Tanner; A. A Lord of Treas. *Mar* 12, 771; Qs. Dr. Tanner, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; As. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 12, 775; Statement, The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 12, 778; Q. Dr. Tanner; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 13, 924; Qs. Mr. Knox, Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien, Mr. Howorth; As. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 16, 1069; Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 19, 1436; Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 23, 1670; Qs. Mr. Dalton, Mr. A. O'Connor; As. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 24, 1764
(Refer also to Debate on *Supply*, *Mar* 12, 778)
Seed Potatoes Supply, Q. Dr. Tanner; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 6, 430; Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 24, 1808

Drainage
Bann, Q. Mr. Lea; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 9, 488
(Refer also to sub-heading *Distress—Relief Works*)
Education
Ballymoney Model School, Q. Sir C. Lewis; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 9, 488
Technical Instruction, Postponed Q. Mr. T. W. Russell *Mar* 5, 250; Q. Mr. T. W. Russell; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 10, 605
Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885 (*Gilson Schools*), Res. *Mar* 19, 1512
Financial Relations of the Three Kingdoms, Debate *Mar* 24, 1801
Fisheries
Castletown Fishermen—Depredations by French Fishermen, Q. Mr. Flynn; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 5, 260
Scomber and Mackerel Fishing Syndicate, Q. Mr. Flynn; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 5, 260
Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom, Return ordered and presented *Mar* 4, 137
Labourers' Cottages (Ireland) Act, Q. Dr. Fitzgerald; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 24, 1764
Labourers' Dwellings in Cork, Q. Dr. Tanner; A. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 12, 776

[*cont.*

Ireland—*cont.*
Land Acts and Land Commission
Baltinglass, Q. Mr. D. Sullivan; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 19, 1436
Cork—Sale of Daniel Kelly's Farm, Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 23, 1671
Holdings—Returns, Q. Mr. Mahony; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 3, 38
Kilmacthomas and Waterford, Q. Mr. P. J. Power; A. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 12, 775; Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 13, 925
Kiltimagh — Judicial Rents, Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 23, 1673
Land Commission "Rules," Qs. Mr. J. E. Ellis; As. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 3, 37; *Mar* 9, 490
Land Commission (Rules as to Purchase), Return ordered *Mar* 24, 1766
Land Purchase (Ireland) Acts (Default of Instalments), Return ordered *Feb* 16 read and discharged, and another Return ordered *Mar* 13, 926
Westmeath, Q. Mr. Tuite; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 19, 1436

Law and Justice and Police
Arklow, Alleged Assault by a Priest at, Q. Mr. De Cobain; A. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 12, 774
Clare Grand Jury and Light Railways, Q. Dr. Tanner; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 6, 430
Four Courts, Dublin, Q. Mr. De Cobain; A. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 5, 257
Parnellite Meeting at Newry—Firing a Revolver, Q. Mr. De Cobain; A. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 12, 774
Police
Castle Island Police, Qs. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; As. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 3, 39; *Mar* 5, 258
Charges against—Constable Connell, Qs. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; As. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 261; *Mar* 9, 489; *Mar* 12, 773
Constabulary Force Fund, Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 254; Q. Mr. E. Harrington; A. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 12, 772; Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Chief Sec. *Mar* 16, 1068
County Inspector Burke, Q. Colonel Waring; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 19, 1437; Q. Colonel Waring; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 23 (*see* list of *Errata*)
Curry, James, Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Chief Sec. *Mar* 23, 1672
Prisoners Awaiting Trial, Q. Sir R. Fowler; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 3, 39
Quane, Miss, Case of, Qs. Sir T. Esmonde; As. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 3, 39; *Mar* 5, 258

Local Government and Poor Law
Ballyshannon Union—Tender for Printing, Q. Mr. T. W. Russell; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 251
Distress (see that sub-heading)

[*cont.*

Ireland—*Local Government and Poor Law*—cont.
Gweedore Union—Guardians, Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 19, 1438
Local Government, Res. 440
Local Loans Fund, Q. Mr. S. Leighton; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 23, 1651

Magistracy
Jagoe, Mr. S., Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 260
Justices of the Peace, County Cavan, Q. Mr. Knox; A. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 5, 256

Miscellaneous
Achill Sound Bridge, Qs. Mr. Deasy, Dr. Tanner; As. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 10, 603
Belfast Pawnbroking Trade, Q. Mr. De Cobain; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 256
Irish Lard — Merchandise Marks Act, Q. Mr. Sexton; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 5, 259
Lord Lieutenant—Religious Disabilities, Q. Mr. Bryce; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 19, 1435
Metalliferous Mines, Q. Mr. W. P. Morgan; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 19, 1433
Open-Air Preaching at Arklow, Q. Mr. De Cobain; A. The Att. Gen. for Ireland *Mar* 12, 773
Ordnance Survey, Q., Obs. Earl of Belmore, The Lord Pres. Council *Mar* 12, 740
Town Commissioners, Loans to, Q. Mr. Knox; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 5, 256

Navy
Cruisers at Bantry (see sub-heading *Fisheries*)
Scomber and Mackerel Fishery Syndicate (see sub-heading *Fisheries*)

Piers and Harbours
Castletownsend, Q. Dr. Tanner; A. A Lord of Treas. *Mar* 12, 771
Kincarslegh, Q. Mr. Lea; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 20, 1539
Lord Courtown's Pier, Q. Dr. Tanner; A. A Lord of Treas. *Mar* 13, 913

Poor Law (see sub-heading *Local Government and Poor Law*)

Post Office
Dublin, Q. Mr. J. F. X. O'Brien; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 5, 254; Q. Dr. Tanner; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 6, 428
Hacketstown and Kiltegan Mail Car, Q. Mr. Byrne; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1671
Kiltimagh Telegraph Station, Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1672
Mails
Larne and Stranraer Route, Q. Mr. Sexton; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 5, 259; Qs. Captain M'Calmont; As. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 9, 488; *Mar* 24, 1765
West Donegal, Q. Mr. MacNeill; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 5, 251

[*cont.*

IRELAND—*Post Office—Mails*—cont.
Waterford Town Postmen, Q. Mr. R. Power; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 24, 1765

Prisons
Belfast Gaol—Proposed Alterations, Q. Mr. Sexton; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 257
Prisoners' Exercise, Postponed Q. Dr. Tanner *Mar* 12, 777; Q. Dr. Tanner; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 16, 1068

Railways and Tramways
Belfast Tramways Lines, Q. Mr. De Cobain; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 5, 255

Light Railways
Ennis and Scariff—Clare Grand Jury's Resolution, Q. Dr. Tanner; A. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 6, 430
Westport and Mulranny, Qs. Dr. Tanner; As. The Chf. Sec. *Mar* 13, 924
(Refer also to sub-heading *Distress—Relief Works*, and Debates on *Supply*, *Mar* 12, 831)

ITALY
Vatican—Maltese Marriages, Qs. Mr. Summers, Mr. Bryce; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 3, 36; Q. Mr. Summers; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 5, 262; Qs. Mr. Summers, Mr. Bryce; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 9, 1435

Itinerant Street Musicians
Address for Returns *Mar* 5, 221

JACKSON, Right Hon. W. L. (Secretary to the Treasury), *Leeds, N.*
Agricultural Labourers' Union, 1424
Army (Annual) Bill, Com. 716
Bankruptcy—Inspector General, 1533
British Museum — Evening Attendance, 1060
Civil Service
Clerks, 1762
Writers, 27, 1054
Customs—Messengers, 36
Financial Relations of the Three Kingdoms—Imperial Taxation in Scotland—Secretaries of State's Salaries, Res. 1809
Inland Revenue Officers — Collecting Agricultural Statistics, 426
Ireland
Achill Sound Bridge, 604
Distress—Seed Potato Supply, 1809
Mails—Larne and Stranraer Route, 259, 488, 1765
Piers—Kincarslegh Pier, 1539
Police—County Inspector Burke, 1437
Town Commissioners, Loans to, 256
Parliament
Business of the House, 720
Hansard Publishing Union, 23
Private Bills Fees, 262
Pensions, Commutation of, 1054
Possession of Game Bill, 720
Post Office
Licensed Victuallers Selling Stamps, 436
Savings Banks Clerks, 1530

[*cont.*

JACKSON, Right Hon. W. L.—*cont.*
Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1569, 1578, 1579, 1580
Scotland—Eyemouth Harbour, 1429
Supply
Bankruptcy—Board of Trade, 524
Civil Service, 1169, 1170, 1171, 1172
Colonial Office, 523
Friendly Societies' Registry, 525
Ireland—Light Railways, 834, 837, 841, 845, 855, 857; Report, 1014
London University, 530, 531, 532
Public Buildings, 1887
Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1835
Scotch Education, 1242, 1244
Superannuation and Retired Allowances, 1095, 1096
Treasury Chest, 570, 571

JACOBY, Mr. J. A., *Derbyshire, Mid.*
Mines (Eight Hours) Bill, 1067, 1675

JAMES, Right Hon. Sir H., *Bury, Lancashire*
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 184, 185
Local Taxation, Res. 985
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1210

JAMES, Hon. W. H., *Gateshead*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1199

JEFFREYS, Mr. A. F., *Hants, Basingstoke*
Army—Magazine Rifle Sights, 1053
Glebe Land at Saxlingham, 921
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1209
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1488, 1558, 1776

JOHNSTON, Mr. W., *Belfast, S.*
Forth and Clyde Ship Canal, 432
Inland Revenue—Lodging-House Keepers, 264
Parliament—Business of the House, 768

JOHORE
Railway, Construction of, Q. Mr. Knox; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 12, 744

JOICEY, Mr. J., *Durham, Chester-le-Street*
Supply—Ireland—Light Railways, 848, 855
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1794

Joint Stock Banks
Qs. Mr. H. H. Fowler, Mr. Atkinson; As. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 16, 1062; Qs. Mr. Atkinson; As. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 17, 1231; *Mar* 19, 1426

Joint Stock Companies
- Return ordered and presented *Mar* 16, 1087

Justices of the Peace Qualification Bill
- c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 10, 606

Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill
- *l.* Order for 2R. read and put off for six months *Mar* 3, 2

Keay, Mr. J. S., *Elgin and Nairn*
- Army Estimates—Egypt—Military Affairs, 325, 326
- Education—St. Paul's School, 1422
- India—Age of Consent Bill, 247
- Indian Councils Bill, 1531
- Parliament—Business of the House, 1435
- Pensions, Commutation of, 1054
- Scotland—Fish-Curing on the Island of Barra, 1535

Kelly, Mr. J. R., *Camberwell, N.*
- Army Service Office Corps, 1531
- Civil Service
  - Admiralty Clerks, 28, 1655
  - Bankruptcy—Inspector General, 1533, 1534
  - Clerks, 1762
  - Writers, 27, 1054
- Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 173
- County Councillors' Disabilities Removal Bill, 2R. 1346
- Custody of Children Bill, Com. 1508
- Inflammable Liquids Bill, 240, 1661
- London Water (Meter) Bill, 2R. 198
- Post Office
  - Officials' Sick Leave, 469
  - Savings Bank Department Clerks, 756, 1657
- Railways—Political Demonstrations at Railway Stations, 1668
- Supply—Votes on Account Civil Service, 1129, 1166, 1169, 1170

Kennaway, Sir J. H., *Devon, Honiton*
- Nablus—English Episcopal Church, 222

Kensington, Lord
- Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill, 2R. 17

Kimber, Mr. H., *Wandsworth*
- Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 167, 168, 183
- Inflammable Liquids Bill, 229, 474
- Merchant Shipping—"Utopia"—Life-Belts, 1658
- Postage of Parliamentary Papers, 229

Kimberley, Earl of
- Africa—Seizure of a British Ship by the Portuguese, 1042
- Duration of Speeches Bill, 1041
- Newfoundland Fisheries Bill, 1641; 1R. 1407, 1414
- Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1371, 1372; 3R. 1522, 1523
- Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Amendts. Reported, 737; 3R. 1187
- Turkey and the Eastern Question, Res. 466

King, Mr. H. S., *Hull, Central*
- India
  - Army
    - Arrest of Captain Drury, 1416
    - Furlough Rules, 1416
    - Officers' Privilege Leave, 1415

Knatchbull-Hugessen, Mr. H. T., *Kent Faversham*
- Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 416
- Navy—Dockyard Pay, 1679
- Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1551

Knox, Mr. E. F. V., *Cavan, W.*
- Custody of Children Bill, Com. 1347
- Ireland
  - Distress—Relief Works, 1069
  - Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act 1885 (Gilson Schools), Res. 1512, 1515
  - Justices of the Peace, County Cavan, 256
  - Town Commissioners, Loans to, 256
- Johore Railway, Construction of, 745
- Supply—Ireland—Light Railways, 849, 855

Knutsford, Lord (Secretary of State for the Colonies)
- Newfoundland Fisheries Bill, 1R. 392, 1414
- Sale of Goods Bill, 2R. 1183

Labouchere, Mr. H., *Northampton*
- Africa—Seizure of a British Vessel by the Portuguese, 1071
- Army
  - Grenadier Guards at Bermuda, 234
  - Ordnance Factory—Stock-taking, 759
- Army Estimates—Egypt—Military Affairs, 297, 298, 306, 317, 320, 330
- Distinguished Personages, Conveyance of, between England and the Continent, 765
- Egypt—Soudan—Tokar—Military Affairs, 23, 475, 476, 1816
- Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1797, 1799
- Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, Res. 1712, 1713, 1714
- Ireland — Agricultural Land — Mortgages 259
- Law and Justice
  - Fees on Probates and Letters of Administration, 764
  - Police—Silksworth Evictions, Res. 295, 296

[*cont.*

LABOUCHERE, Mr. H.—*cont.*
  Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1204, 1211
  Naval Uniforms, 759
  Parliament
    Business of the House, 1680
    Morning Sittings, Res. 1075
  Post Office—Superior Officers, 759
  Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill—Select Com. 1688
  Supply
    Armenian, Egyptian, and African Affairs, 1111, 1131, 1134, 1138, 1139, 1141, 1143, 1145, 1161
    Colonial Office Telegrams, 519, 520, 521
    Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1879, 1882, 1884, 1885
    Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1859, 1860, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1866, 1868
    Ireland
      Constabulary Force, 1092
      Light Railways, 843, 844, 845
      Superannuation and Retired Allowances, 1093, 1096
    London and Sheerness Police Courts—Salaries, &c. 525, 527, 528
    London University, 530
    Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1817, 1818, 1820, 1825, 1834
    Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1840, 1843, 1845, 1846, 1854
    West and South Africa, 546, 566
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1788

Labour, Trade, and Commerce
  American and Irish Lard, Q. Mr. Sexton; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 5, 259
  Chlorodyne, Sale of, Q. Mr. S. Smith; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1654
  Commercial Treaties with the Colonies, Obs. Mr. H. Vincent *Mar* 17, 1288; Q. Mr. H. Vincent; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 23, 1660; Res. *Mar* 23, 1744
  Factory and Workshops Acts
    Half-Timers, Qs. Mr. Picton; As. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 12, 750
    Inspectors, Q. Mr. Broadhurst; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 5, 245
    Textile Trades (Hours and Wages of Half-Timers), Return ordered *Mar* 13, 927
      Extension of Information, ordered *Mar* 20, 1540
  Food and Drugs Act, Persecutions under (see title *Law and Justice and Police*)
  Game Imports from Norway, Q. Mr. Barclay; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 17, 1227
  Labour
    Agricultural Labourers' Union, Q. Mr. Brookfield; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 19, 1423
    Berlin Conference, Q. Mr. E. Lees; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 19, 1434
    Eight Hours Bill, Q. Sir F. Milner; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 9, 491
    Explosions in Ironworks—Glasgow and Gartsherrie (see title SCOTLAND)

[*cont.*

Labour, Trade, and Commerce—cont.
    Royal Commission on Labour and Capital, Qs. Mr. J. Collings, Mr. Cobb, Mr. Sexton, Mr. Duncan; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 3, 34; Q. Mr. Summers; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 6, 437; Q. Mr. D. Thomas; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 10, 602; Q. Mr. Bryce; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 16, 1065; Q. Mr. Channing; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 17, 1236; Q. Mr. S. Rendel; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 20, 1539; Qs. Mr. Howell, Mr. J. E. Ellis; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 24, 1763; Qs. Mr. E. Robertson, Mr. Howell; As. The First Lord of Treas. *April* 6, 1814
  Mines
    Coal Mine Accidents—Recommendations of the Commission, Q. Mr. S. T. Evans; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 17, 1226
    Coal Mines Regulation Act
      Airdrie District, Q. Mr. Crawford; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1663
      Inspectors' Reports, Q. Mr. Pickard; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 24, 1761
      Welsh Collieries—Winding Coal, Qs. Mr. D. Thomas; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 10, 591
    Explosions—Returns, Q. Mr. H. J. Wilson; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1668
    Metalliferous Mines, Q. Mr. W. P. Morgan; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 19, 1433
    Silksworth Evictions (see *Law and Justice and Police*)
  Petroleum and Inflammable Liquids (see title *Inflammable Liquids Bill*)
  Railway Servants' Hours of Labour, &c. (see title *Board of Trade*)
  Strikes—Scotch Railway Strike (see title SCOTLAND)

Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Bill
c. Read 2° *Mar* 17, 1199

Land Commission (Ireland) (Rules as to Purchase)
  Return ordered *Mar* 24, 1766

Land Purchase (Ireland) Acts [Default of Instalments]
  Order *Feb* 16 for Return read and discharged, and another Return ordered *Mar* 13, 926

Law Agents (Scotland) Bill
c. Read 2° * *Mar* 12, 858
  Com.—R.P. *Mar* 19, 1512

Law and Justice and Police
  Baby Farming, Q. Mr. Channing; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1678
  Bankruptcy
    Bankrupt Trustees, Q. Mr. F. S. Stevenson; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 19, 1432
    Inspector General, Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 20, 1533

[*cont.*

Law and Justice and Police—cont.
  Betting and Gambling, Qs. Mr. S. Smith, Sir W. Lawson; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 5, 226; Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 17, 1233; Res. *Mar* 17, 1262; Q. Mr. M. Stewart; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 19, 1431; Q. Mr. Morton; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1670
    Baccarat Scandal (See ARMY—*Officers*)
  Bishop of Lincoln's Case, Q. Colonel Sandys; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 10, 601
  Boy Messenger and District Messenger Companies v. *Post Office* (see title POST OFFICE)
  Cathcart, Mrs. (see title *Lunacy*)
  Contempt of Court, Imprisonment for, Qs. Mr. Cobb; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 19, 1421; *Mar* 23, 1659
  County Court Sittings, Q. Mr. H. H. Fowler; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 12, 767; Return ordered *Mar* 23, 1756
  Directors' Liability Act, Qs. Mr. Stansfeld, Sir G. Campbell; As. The. Att. Gen. *Mar* 9, 472
  Fees on Probates and Letters of Administration, Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 12, 764
  Food and Drugs Act, Prosecutions under—"*Police* v. *Cannon*," Q. Mr. H. Gladstone; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 12, 757
  "*Frances Bennett* v. *Buxton Lime Company*," Qs. Mr. Pickard; As. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 3, 34; *Mar* 5, 246
  "*Holmes* v. *Hardwick*"—*Hosiery Manufacture Act*, Q. Mr. Picton; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 17, 1227
  Inquests
    Bedford, The Late Duke of, Qs. Mr. Cobb; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 5, 235; *Mar* 6, 429; *Mar* 12, 758
    Fire Inquests, Q. Mr. Brookfield; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 19, 1425
  Intimidation—Norwich Magistrates, Q. Mr. Colman; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 12, 755
  Licensing
    Gosport Petty Sessions—Selling Beer to Intoxicated Persons, Qs. Mr. J. O'Connor, Admiral Field; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 3, 32
    Public Houses, Excessive Drinking at, Q. Mr. Rowntree; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 9, 482
    Regulation of Licensed Houses by Magistrates, Q. Mr. O. V. Morgan; A. The Att. Gen. *April* 6, 1813
    "*Sharp* v. *Wakefield*," Qs. Sir W. Lawson, Mr. T. W. Russell; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1660
    Shebeens and Bogus Clubs in Whitechapel, Q. Mr. Rowntree; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 16, 1057
    (See also title *Licensing*)
  London (City) Trial of Civil Causes, Q. Mr. Darling; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 20, 1537

[*cont.*

Law and Justice and Police—cont.
  Magistracy
    Justices of the Peace, Qualification of, Q. Mr. Bigwood; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 10, 598; Q. Mr. Seale-Hayne; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 10, 602
    (See also *Justices of the Peace Qualification Bill*)
    Middlesex Magistrates, Q. Mr. Howard; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 6, 438
  Marriage Laws, Q. Mr. Woodall; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 19, 1433
  Metalliferous Mines, Q. Mr. W. P. Morgan; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 19, 1433
  "*Mitchell* v. *Regina*" (see title ARMY—*Officers*)
  Poaching—Case of Laycock, Q. Mr. Conybeare; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 16, 1066
  Police
    Police Act, 1890 (*Superannuation Scales*), Address for Return *Mar* 12, 860
    Silksworth Evictions—Conduct of the Police and Mr. Storey, M.P., Qs. Mr. Storey, Mr. J. Wilson (Durham, Mid), Sir W. Lawson; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 5, 237; Motion for Adj. *Mar* 5, 269; Q. Mr. Wharton; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 13, 925; Q. Mr. Gourley; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 16, 1058; Personal Explanation, Mr. Storey *Mar* 16, 1072; Q. Mr. Storey; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1650
  Prisoners Awaiting Trial, Q. Sir R. Fowler; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 3, 28
  Prisons
    Warder Schoolmasters and other Officials' Grievances, Q. Mr. Beaufoy; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 10, 595; Q. Mr. Pickersgill; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 24, 1762
  Quarter Sessions Boroughs (*England and Wales*), Address for Return *Mar* 11, 649
  Queen's Bench Division—Alleged Inability of one of the Judges, Qs. Mr. Cobb; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 9, 486
  Reformatory and Industrial School Ships, Res. (Admiral Field) *Mar* 23, 1723
  Religious Disabilities and the Privy Council, Q. Mr. Summers; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 5, 262; Qs. Mr. Bryce, Mr. Summers; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 19, 1435
  Severe Sentences—Surrey Sessions, Q. Mr. Morton; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 16, 1054
  Silksworth Evictions (see sub-heading *Police*)
  Whitechapel Murder, Q. Mr. Esslemont; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 9, 483

LAWRENCE, Mr. W. F., *Liverpool, Abercromby*
  Post Office—Liverpool General Office, 763

LAWSON, Mr. H. L. W., *St. Pancras, W.*
  British Museum—Evening Attendance, 1060
  Charity Commissioners—St Paul's School, 1060
  Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 172

[*cont.*

LAWSON, Mr. H. L. W.—*cont.*
County Electors Act, 913, 914
Local Taxation, Res. 935, 952, 956, 957, 959, 974, 984, 995, 1002
London Water (Meter) Bill, 2R. 196
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), 1538; Res. 1596, 1608, 1609, 1619, 1636
Parliament—Business of the House, Res. 932

LAWSON, Sir W., *Cumberland, Cockermouth*
Army Estimates—Egypt—Military Affairs, 327, 329
Law and Justice and Police
Betting at Race Meetings, 226
Licensing—"Sharp *v.* Wakefield," 1660
Silksworth Evictions and the Police, 239
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 1440
Parliament—Business of the House, 1681

LEA, Mr. T., *Londonderry, S.*
Ireland
Bann Drainage, 488
Kincarslegh Pier, 1539
Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill, 1814
Supply—Ireland—Light Railways, 852

LEFEVRE, Right Hon. J. G. Shaw, *Bradford, Central*
Army (Annual) Bill, Com. 1261; 3R. 1318
Army Estimates — Pay and Allowances, Report, 574, 575
Glebes, Sale of, Res. 1691, 1701, 1702, 1706
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1209
Naval Defence Act, 1889, Expenditure under, 243
Navy Estimates (Supplementary)—Navy Service, 495, 511, 518
Parliament—Business of the House, 1679, 1765
Savings Banks Bill, 2R. 1256, 1258; Com. 1573, 1576
Supply
Admiralty Extension Buildings 1872 1873
Art and Science Buildings, 1877
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1882, 1883
Public Buildings, 1888
Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1841

LEGH, Mr. T. W., *Lancashire, S.W., Newton*
Foreign Office and Diplomatic Service, Res. 1715, 1716
Supply—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1885

LEIGHTON, Mr. S., *Shropshire, Oswestry*
Colonial Inscribed Stock, 1531
Cyprus—Taxation under the Turkish Tribute, 585, 586, 587
Jamaica—Railways, 587

[*cont.*

LEIGHTON, Mr. S.—*cont.*
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1319
Local Authorities, Indebtedness of, 1652
Local Loans Funds, 1651
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1482

LENG, Mr. J., *Dundee*
Army—Crimean Veterans, 25, 753
Berlin Labour Conference, 1431
Cattle Importation, 229
Education—State-Aided Schools, 223
London Water Supply, 1051
Savings Banks Bill, 2R. 1251
Scotland—Pauper Children—Boarding Out, 753
Supply—Scotch Education, 1245

LETHBRIDGE, Sir R., *Kensington, N.*
Supply—Ceylon Affairs, 1160

LEVESON-GOWER, Mr. G. G., *Stoke-upon-Trent*
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 92
Supply—Armenian Affairs, 1105
Turkey
Crete, Condition of, 230
Erzeroum—Disturbances, 230
Moussa Bey, 230

LEWIS, Sir C. E., *Antrim, N.*
Ireland—Ballymoney Model School, 488

Licensing
Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Licences Returns, Q. Mr. Winterbotham; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 10, 601
On-Licences and Tied Houses, Qs. Mr. Summers; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 6, 432; *Mar* 9, 485; *Mar* 19, 1418
Regulation of Licensed Houses, Q. Mr. O. V. Morgan; A. The Att. Gen. *April* 6, 1813
Sale of Postage Stamps by Publicans (see title POST OFFICE)
(See also title *Law and Justice and Police* — sub-heading *Licensing*)

LINGEN, Lord
Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1360, 1362, 1368, 1369, 1375; 3R. 1523, 1526

Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill
c. Read 2° *Mar* 18, 1290
Com. *Mar* 19, 1512

Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill
Mistake in the Counts on the 2R. Division, Qs. and Obs. Sir W. Lawson, Mr. Speaker, Mr. J. M. Maclean *Mar* 19, 1440

Literature, Science, and Art
American Copyright Act, Q. Mr. H. Vincent; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 6, 436
Anonymous Editorial Articles, Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 3, 35

[*cont.*

Literature, Science, and Art—cont.
Art Gallery at South Kensington—Donation of £80,000, Q. Sir H. Roscoe; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 19, 1424
British Museum—Evening Attendance, Q. Mr. Lawson; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 16, 1060
National Gallery—Annual Report, Qs. Dr. Farquharson; As. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 17, 1223
National Gallery of British Art, Qs. Mr. Quilter, Dr. Farquharson; As. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 10, 595
Royal Academy—Sending In Days, Q., Obs. Lord Sandhurst, The Marquess of Salisbury, The Archbishop of Canterbury *Mar* 20, 1517
South Kensington Museum—Completion Competition, Q. Mr. Bartley; A. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 16, 1050
Sunday Opening of Museums, Q. Mr. Lawson; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 20, 1538; Res. (Mr. Lawson) *Mar* 20, 1596

LLEWELLYN, Mr. E. H., *Somerset, N.*
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 673, 680, 684

LLOYD-GEORGE, Mr. D., *Carnarvon, &c.*
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1340
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1445, 1451, 1461, 1463, 1480, 1495, 1504

Local Government Acts of England and Scotland Repeal Bill
l. Presented; Read 1ª* *Mar* 3, 23
c. Order for 2R. read and discharged *Mar* 12, 721

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—President (*see* RITCHIE, Right Hon. C. T.)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD—Secretary to (*see* LONG, Mr. W. H.)

Local Government Board
Allotments (see that title)
Census—Index to Population Tables (see title *Census*)
County Council Elections, Postponement of, Qs. Mr. Channing, Mr. J. Stuart; As. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 17, 1220
County Electors Act, Qs. Mr. Lawson; As. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 13, 913
Food and Drugs Act, Prosecutions under (see title *Law and Justice and Police*)
Local Authorities, Indebtedness of, Q. Mr. S. Leighton; A. The Sec. to Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 23, 1652
Local Government, Amendt. to Motion for going into Com. of Supply *Mar* 6, 440
Local Loans Fund, Q. Mr. S. Leighton; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 23, 1651
Local Taxation, Res. (Mr. J. Stuart) *Mar* 13, 933

cont.]

Local Government Board—cont.
London Water Supply, Qs. Mr. Leng, Mr. Boulnois; As. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 16, 1051
Main Roads and County Bridges, Qs. Mr. Rowntree; As. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 16, 1055; Q. Mr. Hobhouse; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 17, 1222
Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act, 1884, Q. Mr. Howard; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 6, 436
Parliamentary Electors Registration, Q. Mr. Causton; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 3, 26
St. James's Vestry—Unequal Assessments, Q. Mr. Cobb; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 19, 1419
Still-Born Children—Returns, Q. Dr. Cameron; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 12, 748
Vaccination
  Deaths from, Q. Mr. Channing; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 12, 754
  Royal Commission—Mr. Bradlaugh's Seat, Q. Mr. Channing; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 6, 436; Qs. Mr. T. Robinson; As. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 10, 600

London County Council (Water Supply, &c.) Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1º* *Mar* 20, 1540

London School Board Elections Bill
Q. Mr. Maple; A. The First Lord. of Treas. *Mar* 13, 924

London Water Commission Bill
c. Nom. of Com. *Mar* 18, 1289
Motion for Instruction to Com. *Mar* 20, 1528

London Water (Meter) Bill
c. 2R.; Debate adjourned *Mar* 4, 196

LONG, Mr. W. H. (Secretary to the Local Government Board), *Wilts, Devizes*
Local Authorities, Indebtedness of, 1653
Public Bodies (Provisional Orders) Bill, 2R. 717

LORD ADVOCATE, The (*see* ROBERTSON, Right Hon. J. P. B.)

LORD CHANCELLOR, The (*see* HALSBURY, Lord)

LORD LIEUTENANT OF IRELAND—Chief Secretary to the (*see* BALFOUR, Right Hon. A. J.)

LORD PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL (*see* CRANBROOK, Viscount)

LORD PRIVY SEAL (*see* CADOGAN, Earl)

LOTHIAN, Marquess of (Secretary for Scotland)
- Registration of Certain Writs (Scotland) Bill, 2R. 1037
- Scotch Railway Strike, 373, 376

LOWTHER, Right Hon. J., *Kent, Isle of Thanet*
- Parliament—Business of the House, 1237, 1679
- Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 135

LOWTHER, Mr. J. W., *Cumberland, Penrith*
- Charity Commissioners
  - Lambeth Charities, 425
  - St. Paul's School, 1061, 1422
  - Yelvertoft Educational Charity, 750

LUBBOCK, Right Hon. Sir J., *London University*
- Census—Index to Population Tables, 424
- Forestry, Select Com. on, 423
- London Water Commission Bill
  - Instruction to Com. 1529
  - Nom. of Com. 1289
- National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1621, 1630
- Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1573, 1577

Lunacy
- *Cathcart, Mrs. Mary*, Qs. Dr. Fitzgerald; As. The Home Sec. *Mar* 6, 433; *Mar* 10, 597; *Mar* 24, 1761

MACARTNEY, Mr. W. E., *Antrim, S.*
- Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill, Com. 573
- Supply—Ireland—Relief of Distress, 810, 811

MACLEAN, Mr. J. M., *Oldham*
- Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 1440; 2R. 1306, 1316
- Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 88
- Post Office—Telegraphing Figures, 1234

MACNAGHTEN, Lord
- Pollen Fisheries (Ireland) Bill, 2R. 732

MAC NEILL, Mr. J. G. S., *Donegal, S.*
- Army Agents, Commissions to, 1418
- India—Salt Tax, 582
- Ireland—Post Office—West Donegal Mails, 251
- Supply—Ireland—Relief of Distress, 805, 808, 810, 811

MCARTHUR, Mr. A., *Leicester*
- National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1609
- Supply—Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1852

MCARTHUR, Mr. W. A., *Cornwall, Mid., St. Austell*
- Nonconformist Funerals, 481

MCCALMONT, Captain J., *Antrim, E.*
- Ireland—Mails—Larne and Stranraer Route, 488, 1765

MCCARTHY, Mr. J., *Londonderry*
- Parliament—Business of the House, 720

MCDONALD, Dr. R., *Ross and Cromarty*
- Income Tax, 29, 596
- Scotland
  - Crofter Act, 1886, Res. 1588, 1589
  - Eviction of a Crofter, 584
  - Highlands and Islands Commission, Res. 1739

MCLAGAN, Mr. P., *Linlithgow*
- Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1321

MCLAREN, Mr. W. S. B., *Cheshire, Crewe*
- Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 401
- Parliament—Private Members' Bills and the Standing Orders, 1067

MADAGASCAR (see AFRICA (EAST COAST)

MADDEN, Right Hon. D. H. (Attorney General for Ireland), *Dublin University*
- Ireland
  - Arklow—Opening-Air Preaching, 774
  - Distress—Relief Works, 775, 776
  - Labourers' Dwellings in Cork, 777
  - Land Commission — Kilmacthomas and Waterford, 775
  - Law and Justice and Police
    - Alleged Assault by a Priest at Arklow, 774
    - Four Courts, Dublin, 257
    - Justices of the Peace, County Cavan, 256
    - Parnellite Meeting at Newry—Firing a Revolver, 774
    - Police
      - Charges against—Constable Connell, 773
      - Constabulary Force Fund, 772
- Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill, Com. 573, 574

MAHONY, Mr. P., *Meath, N.*
- Cattle Sales—Statistics, 25
- Ireland—Holdings—Returns, 38

Mail Ships Bill
- c. Read 2° *Mar* 20, 1581
  - Com.—R.P. *Mar* 23, 1755; *Mar* 24, 1810

Maintenance of Destitute Parents Bill
- c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 17, 1238

MAKINS, Colonel W. T., *Essex, S.W.*
Metropolitan Water Companies' Charges Bill, 2R. 192

MALTA
Maltese Marriage Laws and the Privy Council (see ITALY)

Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill
c. Read 2°; Motion for Select Com. negatived, and Motion for Instruction to Com. *Mar* 17, 1199

MAPLE, Mr. J. B., *Camberwell, Dulwich*
London School Board Elections Bill, 924
London Water (Meter) Bill, 2R. 196

MARJORIBANKS, Right Hon. E., *Berwickshire*
Army—Magazine Rifles, 248, 1429
Army (Annual) Bill, Com. 1260
Chinese Pirates, 237
Scotland
Education Code (1891), 1180
Eyemouth Habour, 1429
Fishery Board, 432
Greenock Police Force, 1229

Marriage Acts Amendment Bill
l. Presented; Read 1ª* *Mar* 23, 1641

Marriages in British Embassies, &c. Bill
Qs. Mr. Woodall; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs., The First Lord of Admy., The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 3, 30

MATHER, Mr. W., *Lancashire, S.E., Gorton*
Australian Mails—Miscarriage of Letters, 428

MATTHEWS, Right Hon. H. (Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Birmingham, E.*
Burial Acts
Ashton-in-Makerfield, 590
Nonconformist Funerals, 481
Custody of Children Bill, Com. 1511
Employers' Liability Bill, 767
Factory and Workshops Bill, 244
Inflammable Liquids Bill, 2R. 229, 240, 473, 474, 599, 754, 1665, 1760
Labour, Trade, and Commerce
Chlorodyne, Sale of, 1654
Factory and Workshops Inspectors, 245
Law and Justice and Police
Baby Farming, 1678
Betting and Gambling, 226, 227, 1233, 1432, 1670; Res. 1280, 1283, 1285, 1286, 1287
Contempt of Court, Imprisonment for, 1421, 1659
"Holmes *v.* Hardwick"—Hosiery Manufacture Act, 1228

[*cont.*

MATTHEWS, Right Hon. H. —*cont.*
Inquests
Bedford, The Late Duke of, 236, 430, 758
Fire Inquests, 1425
Intimidation—Norwich Magistrates, 755
Magistrates
Justices of the Peace, 598
Middlesex Magistrates, 438
Poaching—Case of Laycock, 1066
Police — Silksworth Evictions — Mr. Storey, M.P., and the Police, 238, 239, 925, 1058; Res. 273, 275, 283, 284, 1651
Prisoners awaiting Trial, 28
Prisons — Warder Schoolmasters and other Officials' Grievances, 595, 1762
Severe Sentences—Surrey Sessions, 1055
Whitechapel Murder, 483
Licensing
Excessive Drinking at Public Houses, 482
Gosport Petty Sessions—Selling Beer to Intoxicated Persons, 32
On-Licences and Tied Houses, 433, 485, 1418
"Sharp *v.* Wakefield," 1660
Shebeens and Bogus Clubs, 1057
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1329, 1332
Lunacy—Cathcart, Mrs. Mary, 433, 597, 1761
Midland Railway Act, 1890—Evictions in Somers Town, 474, 475
Mines
Accidents — Recommendation by the Commission, 1226
Coal Mines Regulation Act
Airdrie District, 1663
Explosions in Coal Mines, 1669
Inspectors' Reports, 1762
Welsh Collieries—Winding Coal, 591
Parliamentary Elections—Illiterate Voters, 1417
Scotland—Explosions in Ironworks, 1759

MAURITIUS
Ex-Sultan Abdullah (see title PERAK)

MAXWELL, Sir H. E. (A Lord of the Treasury), *Wigton*
Distinguished Personages, Conveyance of, between England and the Continent, 765
Friendly Societies, Res. 610, 629
Ireland
Castletownsend Pier, 771, 772
Lord Courtown's Pier, 913
Parliament—Private Bill Fees, 762
Post Office—Sale of Stamps by Publicans, 753

MAYNE, Admiral R. C., *Pembroke and Haverfordwest*
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1623
Navy
Brennan Torpedoes, 1426, 1666
Gibraltar Dock, 1677
Naval Police, 1677

[*cont.*

MAYNE, Admiral R. C.—*cont.*
  Officers
    Captains and Commanders of Ships—Full Pay, 31
    "Senior Store Officer of Naval Guns," 31

Merchandise Marks Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 12
  Read 2° * *Mar* 23, 1755
  Com. *—R.P. *April* 6, 1892

Merchandise Marks Prosecutions (Costs)
c. Instruction to Com. *Mar* 24, 1811
  Com. * *April* 6, 1892

Merchant Shipping (see title *Board of Trade*)

Merchant Ships' Mates and Petty Officers (Wages)
  Return ordered *Mar* 12, 777

Metropolis
  Itinerant Street Musicians, Address for Return *Mar* 5, 221
  Local Taxation, Motion (Mr. J. Stuart) *Mar* 13, 933
  London Water Supply (see title *Local Government Board*)
  Parks and Pleasure Gardens
    Kensington Gardens—South Kensington Subway, Q. Colonel Hambro; A. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 17, 1220
    Kew Gardens—Official Guide, Q. Mr. J. E. Ellis; A. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 3, 24
    Regent's Park Lake, Bathing in, Q. Mr. T. H. Bolton; A. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 10, 594
  Police Act, 1890 (*Superannuation Scales*), Address for Return *Mar* 12, 860

Metropolis (Shelton Street, St. Giles) Provisional Order Bill
c. Read 2° *Mar* 13, 900

Metropolis Water Supply Bill
c. Read 2°, and com. to Select Com. on the Metropolis Water Commission Bill, and Orders with reference to Petitions, &c. *Mar* 4, 199

Metropolitan District Railway Bill
c. Read 3° and passed *Mar* 17, 1197

Metropolitan Water Bills
  Q. Mr. Hermon-Hodge; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 5, 265

Metropolitan Water Companies' Charges Bill
c. Read 2°, and com. to Select Com. on the Metropolitan Water Commission Bill *Mar* 4, 190

Midland Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill
c. Ordered to be referred to a Joint Com. of Lords and Commons, and Message sent to the Lords *Mar* 6, 423
l. Message received *Mar* 9, 457
  Con. and agreed to, and communicated to the Commons *Mar* 10, 577, 605
c. Select Com. of Lords and Commons ordered, and Petitions, &c. ordered, and Message sent to the Lords *Mar* 16, 1043; Report *Mar* 20, 1582

MILNER, Sir F. G., *Nottingham, Bassetlaw*
  Eight Hours Bill, 491

Mines (see *Labour, Trade, and Commerce*)

Mines (Eight Hours) Bill
c. Order for 2R. read and adjourned *Mar* 18, 1343

Mines (Eight Hours) Bill
  Qs. Mr. Jacoby; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 16, 1067; *Mar* 23, 1675

MONK-BRETTON, Lord
  Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1358, 1361, 1363, 1365, 1366, 1368, 1370, 1376
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, 3R. 1186, 1187

MONKSWELL, Lord
  Technical Instruction Bill, 3R. 1522

MONTAGU, Mr. S., *Tower Hamlets, Whitechapel*
  Indian Council Bills, 1647, 1648
  Local Taxation, Res. 944, 947
  Supply—Coinage, 1174

MORGAN, Right Hon. G. O., *Denbighshire, E.*
  Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 161, 166
  Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1325
  Parliament—Business of the House, Res. 932
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, 1290; Lords Amendts. con. 1444, 1445, 1447, 1478, 1498, 1507, 1554

MORGAN, Mr. J. L., *Carmarthen, West*
  Post Office—Boy Messengers Company and Corps of Commissionaires, 1667

MORGAN, Mr. O. V., *Battersea*
  America (South)—Telegraphic Communication, 262
  Licensing—Regulation of Licensed Houses, 1813

MORGAN, Mr. W. P., *Merthyr Tydvil*
Army—Volunteers in Merionethshire, 1430
Colonies—Gold and Silver Mining, 484
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 175
Metalliferous Mines, 1433
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1793

MORLEY, Earl of
Saint Margaret's, Leicester, Select Vestry Bill, 2R. 872
Technical Instruction Bill, 3R. 1525

MORLEY, Right Hon. J., *Newcastle-upon-Tyne*
Egypt—Soudan—Tokar—Military Affairs, 227, 475
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1334
Navy Estimates (Supplementary) — Navy Service, 504, 512, 513
Parliament—Business of the House, 266, 438 ; Res. 929
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 130
Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill, 1814
Supply—Ireland
  Light Railways, 831, 837, 839, 840, 841
  Relief of Distress, 792, 793, 794, 803

MORTON, Mr. A. C., *Peterborough*
Army Estimates—Egypt—Military Affairs, 323
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 167
Lambeth Charities, 424
Law and Justice
  Betting and Gambling, 1670 ; Res. 1271, 1286
  Severe Sentences — Case of Edwards, 1054
Newfoundland Fishery Rights, 1674, 1675, 1813
  Arbitration Board, 1233
Post Office—Foreign Postage of Newspapers, 1667
Supply
  Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1885, 1886
  Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1867, 1868, 1870, 1871, 1872
  Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, 1876
  Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1819, 1822, 1823, 1825, 1828, 1830, 1834, 1837
  Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1847, 1848, 1849
  West and South Africa, 547, 548
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1447, 1565, 1777

MUNDELLA, Right Hon. A. J., *Sheffield, Brightside*
Army—Ordnance Factories—Steel Forgings, 752
Birkenhead Elementary Schools, 471

MUNDELLA, Right Hon. A. J.—*cont.*
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 414, 416
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1214

Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act
Q. Mr. Howard ; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 6, 436

Municipal Elections (Married Women's Disabilities Removal) Bill
c. Ordered ; Read 1° * *Mar* 13, 933

MURDOCH, Mr. C. T., *Reading*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1213, 1214

Museums and Gymnasiums Bill
c. As amended Con. *Mar* 5, 343
  Read 3° * and passed *Mar* 9, 576
l. Read 1ª * *Mar* 10, 579

National Debt
Return ordered *Mar* 17, 1237

National Museums and Picture Galleries (see title *Literature, Science, and Art*)

National Provident Insurance—Select Committee's Recommendations
Q. Mr. H. Vincent ; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 19, 1422

NAVY
Admiralty Clerks, Qs. Mr. Kelly ; As. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 3, 28 ; *Mar* 23, 1655
Ascension Island, Address for Return *Mar* 20, 1582
Australia — Admiralty Establishments at Sydney, Qs. Sir J. Colomb ; As. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 23, 1676
Defences
  Imperial Defence Act, Expenditure under, Q. Sir W. Harcourt ; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 23, 1666
  Naval Defence Act, 1889, *Expenditure under*, Q. Mr. S. Lefevre ; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 5, 243
Docks
  Employment of Labour—Limit of Age for Admission, Q. Major Rasch ; A. The Sec. to Admy. *Mar* 19, 1418
  Gibraltar Accommodation, Q., Obs. Viscount Sidmouth, Lord Elphinstone *Mar* 17, 1193 ; Q. Admiral Mayne ; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 23, 1677
  Workmen's Wages, Q. Mr. Howell ; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 3, 37 ; Q. Mr. H. T. Knatchbull-Hugessen ; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 23, 1679

NAVY—*cont.*
Egypt
Statement by the First Lord of Admy., Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The First Lord of Admy. *April* 6, 1816
Tokar Expedition—Ships in the Red Sea, Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 9, 476
(Refer also to title EGYPT)
Greenwich Hospital
Painted Hall Relics and the Naval Exhibition, Q. Mr. Boord; A. The Sec. to Admy. *Mar* 17, 1235
Ireland
Cruisers at Bantry—Depredations by French Fishermen, Q. Mr. Flynn; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 5, 260
Scomber and Mackerel Fishing Syndicate, Q. Mr. Flynn; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 5, 260
Marines, Annual Cost of, Q. Sir J. P. Hennessy; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 9, 482
Marriage Act, 1890—Marriages on Board Ship, Q. Mr. Woodall; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 3, 30
Naval Police, Q. Admiral Mayne; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 23, 1677
Navy Services—Expenditure—Returns, Qs. Sir W. Harcourt; As. The Secretary for War, The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 12, 761
Newfoundland—War Ships off the Coast, Q. Mr. Howell; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 24, 1760
Officers
Captains and Commanders of Ships—Full Pay, Q. Admiral Mayne; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 3, 31
Non-Commissioned Officers and the Civil Service, Q., Obs. Earl of Dundonald, Lord Dorchester, Lord Sudeley, Lord Chelmsford, Earl Brownlow *Mar* 19, 1377
Promotion, Qs., Obs. Lord Sudeley, Viscount Sidmouth, Lord Elphinstone, Earl of Northbrook *Mar* 16, 1017
"*Senior Store Officer of Naval Guns*," Q. Admiral Mayne; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 3, 31
Uniforms, Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 12, 759
Ordnance Department
Brennan Torpedoes, Qs. Admiral Mayne; As. The Sec. for War *Mar* 19, 1426; *Mar* 23, 1666
Royal Naval Reserve—Annual Drill, Qs. Sir G. Baden-Powell; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 23, 1663
Ships
Distinguished Personages, Conveyance of, between England and the Continent, Qs. Mr. Labouchere; As. A Lord of Treas., The First Lord of Treas., The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 12, 765
Reformatory and Industrial School Ships, Res. (Admiral Field) *Mar* 23, 1723
Ships Available, April 1, 1891, Return ordered *Mar* 17, 1237
Training Squadrons, Q. Sir J. Colomb; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 24, 1808
[*cont.*

NAVY—cont.
Signalling — Admiral Colomb's Invention Return ordered *Mar* 10, 580
Torpedo Buoys at Shoeburyness, Q. Major Rasch; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 10, 589

Navy Estimates
71,000 Men and Boys, Report* *Mar* 5, 343
£3,404,000—Officers and Seamen, Wages, &c., Report* *Mar* 5, 343
£350,000 (Supplementary)—Navy Service, Com. *Mar* 9, 494; Report* *Mar* 12, 858

Navy (Flashing Signals)
Return ordered *Mar* 10, 580

Navy (Ships Available, 1st April, 1891)
Return ordered *Mar* 17, 1237

NEVILLE, Mr. R., *Liverpool, Exchange*
Post Office — Second-Class Telegraphists, 1063

NEWFOUNDLAND
Fisheries Disputes as to French Rights, &c., Q. Mr. Howell; A. The First Lord of Admy. *Mar* 24, 1760
Arbitration Board, Qs. Mr. Morton, Sir G. Campbell; As. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs., The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 17, 1233
French Treaty Rights, Q. Mr. Morton; A The First Lord of Treas. *April* 6, 1813
Government Loan, Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 12, 766
House of Lords Bill, Qs. Sir J. Pope Hennessy, Mr. S. Hill; As. The First Lord of Treas., The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 20, 1536; Qs., Obs. Earl of Kimberley, Marquess of Salisbury *Mar* 23, 1641; Qs. Mr. W. E. Gladstone, Mr. S. Hill, Captain Price, Mr. Morton; As. The First Lord of Treas., Mr. Speaker *Mar* 23, 1673
Papers Relating to, Q. Mr. S. Hill; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 9, 491

Newfoundland Fisheries Bill
l. Presented; Read 1ª *Mar* 19, 1392

NOLAN, Colonel J. P., *Galway, N.*
Ireland—Distress—Relief Works, 434
Supply
Colonial Office—Telegrams, 520, 521
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1878, 1884
Houses of Parliament, 1855, 1857, 1859, 1861, 1863
Ireland
Light Railways, 833, 852, 855
Relief of Distress, 794
Treasury Chest, 570, 571

NORRIS, Mr. E. S., *Tower Hamlets, Limehouse*
Brunei, Sultan of, and Raja Brooke, 915
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1619

NORTHBROOK, Earl of
  Navy—Officers' Promotion, 1032

NORTON, Lord
  Borrowing (Infants) Bill, 2R. 1355
  Education Code, 876
  Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf) Bill, Amendts. Reported, 577, 579
  Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1363, 1367

NORWAY
  Game, Importation of, to England, Q. Mr. Barclay; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 17, 1227

O'BRIEN, Mr. J. F. X., *Mayo, S.*
  Ireland
    Army—Drugs Contract, 1438
    Distress—Relief Works, 253, 604, 776, 1069, 1070, 1436, 1670
    Land Commission—Sale of Daniel Kelly's Farm, 1671
    Magistracy—Mr. S. Jagoe, 260
    Police
      Castle Island—Cork Police, 39, 258
      Charges against — Constable Connell, 261, 489, 773
    Poor Law—Gweedore Union—Guardians, 1438
    Post Office—Dublin Clearing House, 254
  Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill, Com. 572, 573, 574
  Supply—Ireland—Relief of Distress, 822

O'CONNOR, Mr. A., *Donegal, E.*
  Ireland—Distress—Relief Works, 1764
  Supply—Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1830

O'CONNOR, Mr. J., *Tipperary, S.*
  Law and Justice—Gosport Petty Sessions—Selling Beer to Intoxicated Persons, 32

PAGET, Sir R. H., *Somerset, Wells*
  Education — Day Training Colleges for Teachers, 1654
  Friendly Societies, Res. 618, 625
  Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 404, 408
  Railway Rates Provisional Order Bill, 265

Parliament
LORDS—
  Chairman of Committees, The Earl of Limerick appointed temporary Chairman in the absence of the Earl of Morley *Mar* 16, 1035

Berkeley Peerage
  Petition of Randal Mowbray Thomas Berkeley, claiming to be Earl of Berkeley, for leave to use the evidence adduced in the case of the claim of William Fitzhardinge Berkeley to the Earldom of Berkeley in 1811, and in the case of the claim of the Right Hon. Sir Maurice Frederick Berkeley in 1859, read and referred to the Com. for Privileges *Mar* 20, 1517

[cont.

PARLIAMENT—LORDS—*cont.*
Miscellaneous
  Private Bill Fees, Qs. Sir J. Goldsmid; As. The Sec. to Treas., The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 5, 261; Q. Sir J. Goldsmid; A. A Lord of Treas. *Mar* 12, 762

New Peers
  Mar 5—William Connor Lord Archbishop of York
    Anthony Wilson Lord Bishop of Winchester
    James Lord Bishop of Manchester
  Mar 9—William Walsham Lord Bishop of Wakefield

Representative Peers for Ireland
  Lord Teignmouth's Claim to Vote read *Mar* 12, 721; Right to Vote established *Mar* 24, 1757
  Earl of Milltown's Claim to Vote read *Mar* 20, 1517
  Lord Dunsany's Claim to Vote read *Mar* 20, 1517
  Lord Auckland's Claim to Vote read *Mar* 23, 1641

Standing Committees
  Committee of Selection, Report *Mar* 3, 23

COMMONS—
Business of the House and Public Business
  Qs. Mr. F. S. Stevenson, Mr. H. Gardner, Mr. J. Morley; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 5, 266; Qs. Mr. J. Morley; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 6, 438; Q. Mr. J. M'Carthy; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 11, 720; Qs. Mr. J. E. Ellis, Mr. Howorth, Mr. Johnston, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, Mr. Bryce, Mr. T. W. Russell, Dr. Tanner, Mr. H. Gardner, Mr. Cobb, Sir W. Harcourt; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 12, 768; Res. *Mar* 13, 928; Qs. Sir G. Trevelyan, Mr. J. Lowther; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 17, 1236; Qs. Mr. Hunter, Sir W. Harcourt, Mr. Keay; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 19, 1434; Q. Mr. Bryce; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 20, 1582; Qs. Mr. J. E. Ellis, Mr. J. Lowther, Mr. S. Lefevre, Mr. E. Robertson, Viscount Wolmer, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Caldwell, Mr. H. H. Fowler, Mr. Finlay, Sir W. Lawson, Mr. W. E. Gladstone, Mr. D. Crawford, Sir J. Swinburne; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 23, 1679; Q. Mr. S. Lefevre; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 24, 1765
  Motion for Adjournment of the House to discuss the conduct of the Police at the Silksworth Evictions *Mar* 5, 269
  Motion for Com. of Supply—Debate *Mar* 9, 491

Committees
  Petitions (see that sub-heading)
  Standing Orders (see sub-heading *Private Bills*)

[cont.

PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*Committees*—cont.
Standing Committees (Chairman's Panel), Reports *Mar* 6, 439; *Mar* 17, 1238
Selection, Reports *Mar* 3, 136; *Mar* 11, 649; *Mar* 13, 927; *Mar* 17, 1261; *Mar* 20, 1582
Standing Committee on Trade, &c., Order for Leave to print Proceedings with Votes *Mar* 19, 1440

Members
Mr. Storey and the Sunderland Police—Personal Explanation *Mar* 16, 1072
(See also sub-heading *Privilege*)

Miscellaneous
Hansard Publishing Union, Q. Mr. J. E. Ellis; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 3, 23
Parliamentary Elections—Illiterate Voters, Q. Mr. Webster; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 19, 1417
Parliamentary Electors—Registration, Q. Mr. Causton; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 3, 26
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. (Mr. Stansfeld) *Mar* 3, 40
Postage of Parliamentary Papers, Q. Mr. Kimber; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 5, 229

New Writs
Mar 12—*For* Borough of Aston Manor, *v.* George Kynoch, Esq. deceased
Mar 16—*For* County of Sligo (Northern Division), *v.* Peter Macdonald, Esq. deceased

Petitions
Committee, Reports *Mar* 4, 200; *Mar* 11, 720; *Mar* 18, 1348

Private Bills
House of Commons and Lords Private Bills Fees, Qs. Sir J. Goldsmid; As. The Sec. to Treas., The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 5, 261; Qs. Sir J. Goldsmid; As. A Lord of Treas. *Mar* 12, 762
Standing Orders, Q. Mr. W. M'Laren; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 16, 1067; Q. Mr. R. G. Webster; A. Mr. Courtney *Mar* 23, 1647

Privilege
Mr. Atkinson and the "Daily News," Obs. Mr. Atkinson, The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 5, 266

Rules and Order of Debate (see *Speaker, The*)

Sittings and Adjournments of the House
Counts-out, Q. Mr. S. Smith; A. The First Lord of Treas *Mar* 5, 247
Easter Recess, Q. Mr. Gardner; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 5, 265
Motion for Adjournment *Mar* 24, 1801
Evening Sitting ordered to commence at a quarter past Four o'clock *Mar* 24, 1812

[*cont.*

PARLIAMENT—COMMONS—*Sittings and Adjournments of the House*—cont.
Morning Sittings, Motion *Mar* 16, 1074
Motion, That the Proceedings of Reports of the Com. of Supply and Ways and Means shall not be interrupted *Mar* 13, 928
Standing Orders, Exemption from—Com. of Supply and Ways and Means *Mar* 16, 1087

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER
House of Commons
Lobby, Proposed Bookstall for, Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 17, 1233

Parliamentary Elections—Franchise, &c. (see *Parliament—Miscellaneous*)

Patent Office (see *Board of Trade*)

Pauperism (England and Wales)
Return presented *Mar* 5, 222

PEASE, Mr. A. E., *York*
Africa—British Indian Subjects in Mozambique, 746

PEASE, Sir J. W., *Durham, Barnard Castle*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1208
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1471

PEEL, Right Hon. A. W. (*see* SPEAKER, The)

Penal Servitude Bill
c. Order for Com. read and discharged, and Bill com. to Standing Com. on Law, &c. *Mar* 9, 575

Pensions
Commutation of Pensions, Q. Mr. Keay; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 16, 1054

PENTON, Captain F. T., *Finsbury, Central*
Army
Magazine Rifles, 600
Volunteer Rifle Ranges, 600, 1050

PERAK
Ex-Sultan Abdullah, Q. Mr. F. S. Stevenson A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 13, 924; Address for Return *Mar* 16, 1089

Pharmacy Acts Amendment Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 20, 1540

Pickard, Mr. B., *York, W.R., Normanton*
Law and Justice—"Francis Bennett *v.* Buxton Lime Company," 34, 246
Mines (Eight Hours) Bill, 2R. 1346
Mining Inspectors' Reports, 1761

Pickersgill, Mr. E. H., *Bethnal Green, S.W.*
Betting and Gambling, Res. 1262, 1285
London Water Commission Bill, Instruction to Com. 1529
Post Office Officials and Politics, 1057
Prison Warders, 1762
Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1579
Supply—Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1838, 1840, 1850, 1851, 1853

Picton, Mr. J. A., *Leicester*
Africa—King Ja Ja, 25
Education—Half-Timers in Factories, 750, 751
Foreign Office, Examination for, 1228
India—Age of Consent Bill, 248
Law and Justice—"Holmes *v.* Hardwick" (Hosiery Manufacture Act), 1227
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1217
Police—Silksworth Evictions, Res. 292

Plowden, Sir W. C., *Wolverhampton, W.*
Navy Estimates (Supplementary)—Naval Service, 515

Plunket, Right Hon. D. R. (First Commissioner of Works, &c.), *Dublin University*
Kew Gardens—Official Guide, 24
National Gallery—Annual Report, 1224
National Gallery of British Art, 596
Parliament—House of Commons—Proposed Bookstall in the Lobby, 1234
Regent's Park Lake, Bathing in, 594
St. Margaret's Church, Westminster—Seats for Members of Parliament, 29
South Kensington Museum Completion Competition, 1050
South Kensington Subway, 1220
Supply
  Admiralty Extension Buildings, 1873
  Art and Science Buildings, 1877, 1878
  Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1879, 1881, 1887
  Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1856, 1858, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1862, 1863, 1864, 1867, 1868, 1869, 1871, 1872
  Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, 1874
  Public Buildings, 1888, 1889
  Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1817, 1821, 1822, 1824, 1825, 1828, 1832, 1837
  Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1839, 1841, 1842, 1843, 1846, 1848, 1849, 1850, 1851, 1853

Police (see *Law and Justice and Police*)

Police Act, 1890 (*Superannuation Scales*)
Address for Return *Mar* 12, 860

Pollen Fisheries (Ireland) Bill
l. Read 1ª * *Mar* 3, 22
Read 2ª, and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 12, 732
Com.*; Report; Re-com. to Standing Com. *Mar* 13, 875
Reported from Standing Com. *Mar* 17, 1181
Amendts. Reported *Mar* 19, 1358
Read 3ª * with Amendts. and passed *Mar* 20, 1521

Poor Law (England and Wales)
Distress for Union Relief, Q. Mr. H. Gardner; A. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 19, 1431
Parish Assessments (see title *Local Government Board*)
Pauperism (*England and Wales*), Return ordered and presented *Mar* 5, 222

Portugal
Anglo-Portuguese Indian Treaties, Q. Sir G. Campbell; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 13, 916
Portuguese in Africa (see title Africa)

Possession of Game Bill
c. Read 2º * *Mar* 11, 716
Com. *—R.P. *Mar* 16, 1176

Possession of Game Bill -
Q. Dr. Clark; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 11, 720

Post Office
America, South (see that title)
Australia (see that title)
Boy Messenger and District Messenger Companies and the Post Office Messenger Service, Qs. Dr. Cameron, Marquess of Carmarthen, Viscount Grimston, Sir G. Baden-Powell; As. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 17, 1229; Qs. Viscount Grimston, Mr. Cobb, Dr. Cameron; As. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 19, 1427; Qs. Mr. Cobb, Dr. Cameron, Lord Elcho; As. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1655; Q. Mr. L. Morgan; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1667; Debate *Mar* 23, 1750
Circulars, Type Written, Qs. Sir C. Dalrymple, Mr. Dixon-Hartland; As. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1661
Colonies — Postal Charges, Q. Sir C. Dalrymple; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1647
Ireland (see that title)
Miscellaneous
  Newspapers, Foreign Postage of, Q. Mr. Morton; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1667
  Parcels with Money in, Q. Mr. Hobhouse; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1659
  Parliamentary Papers, Postage of, Q. Mr. Kimber; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 5, 229
  Re-Addressed Letters, Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 10, 583

[*cont.*

POST OFFICE—*Miscellaneous*—cont.
Sale of Postage Stamps by Licensed Victuallers, Postponed Q. Mr. Cobb *Mar* 5, 234; Q. Mr. Cobb; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 6, 435; Qs. Mr. Cobb; As. A Lord of Treas. *Mar* 12, 752
Sunday Collection of Letters in London, Q. Sir J. Swinburne; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1663
Transmission of Single Letters by Rail, Q. Mr. J. S. Balfour; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 12, 762
Officials
Post Office Punishments—Case of C. A. Lowe, Qs. Earl Compton; As. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 13, 917
Sick Leave, Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 9, 469
Sunbury Common Post Office Officials and Politics, Q. Mr. Pickersgill; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 16, 1057
Superior Officers, Q. Mr. Labouchere; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 12, 759
Post Offices
Liverpool General Office, Q. Mr. W. F. Lawrence; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 12, 763
Morpeth—Non-Delivery of Letters, Q. Mr. Burt; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 16, 1055
Nottingham—Letter Carriers, Q. Mr. H. S. Wright; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1664
Savings Bank Department
Banking Reserves, Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 16, 1059
Clerks, Q. Earl Compton; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 9, 477; Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 12, 756; Q. Earl Compton; A. The Sec. to Treas. *Mar* 20, 1530; Q. Mr. S. Hunt; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 24, 1758
Deferred Annuities, Q. Mr. Rankin; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 5, 222
Expenditure in, Q. Mr. Kelly; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 23, 1657
Scotland (see that title)
Telegraphs
Central Office — Sunday Duty, Q. Earl Compton; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 9, 479
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Branch, Q. Mr. Burt; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 12, 756
Press Telegrams, Q. Mr. J. Bright; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 5, 225
Receipts for Telegrams, Q. Mr. Buchanan; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 19, 1430
Telegraphing Figures, Q. Mr. Maclean; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 17, 1234
Telegraphists — Second Class, Q. Mr. Neville; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 16, 1063
West Indies (see that title)

POSTMASTER GENERAL (*see* RAIKES, Right Hon. H. C.)

Potato Crop, 1890 (*Ireland and Great Britain*)
Return ordered and presented *Mar* 6, 439

POWELL, Mr. F. S., *Wigan*
Education
Cardiff Day Training College, 1221
Public Elementary Schools, Rating of, 486
Museums and Gymnasiums Bill, Con. 343

POWER, Mr. P. J., *Waterford, E.*
Ireland—Land Commission—Kilmacthomas and Waterford, 775

POWER, Mr. R., *Waterford*
Ireland—Waterford Town Postmen, 1765

Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 16, 1089
Read 2° *April* 6, 1891

Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Act (see SCOTLAND)

PRICE, Captain G. E., *Devonport*
Newfoundland—Fishery Rights, 1674

PRIME MINISTER (*see* SALISBURY, Marquess of)

Prisons (England and Wales) (see title *Law and Justice and Police*)

Prisons (Ireland) (see title IRELAND—*Prisons*)

Private and Provisional Order Confirmation Bills
l. Orders with reference to *Mar* 5, 201
Appointment of Select Com., Debate adjourned *Mar* 23, 1683

Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill
Q. Mr. L. Fry; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 13, 925

Privy Council Judicial Committee
Bishop of Lincoln's Case, Q. Colonel Sandys; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 10, 601
Maltese Marriage Laws and Roman Catholic Disabilities in England, Qs. Mr. Bryce, Mr. Summers; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 3, 36; Q. Mr. Summers; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 5, 262; Qs. Mr. Summers, Mr. Bryce; As. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 19, 1435

PROVAND, Mr. A. D., *Glasgow, Blackfriars, &c.*
Explosions in Glasgow, 922
Imperial Taxation, 592

Public Accounts and Charges Bill
c. Ordered; Read 1° * *Mar* 18, 1348

Public Bodies (Provisional Orders) Bill
c. Read 2° *Mar* 11, 717
Com. * *Mar* 12, 860 ; *Mar* 17, 1261
As amended, Con. ; Read 3° * and passed *Mar* 18, 1348
l. Read 1ª * *Mar* 19, 1349

Public Health (London) Bill
Qs. Mr. S. Buxton, Mr. Bartley ; As. The Pres. Loc. Gov. Bd. *Mar* 20, 1539

Puleston, Sir J. H., *Devonport*
City and South London Railway Bill, Instruction to Com. 380, 384, 385
South Kensington and Paddington Subway Bill, Select Com. 580
Supply—Civil Service Writers, 1171

Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill
Qs. Mr. Lea, Mr. J. Morley ; As. The First Lord of Treas. *April* 6, 1814

Quarter Sessions (Boroughs) (England and Wales)
Address for Return *Mar* 11, 649

Quilter, Mr. W. C., *Suffolk, Sudbury*
National Gallery of British Art, 595

Raikes, Right Hon. H. C. (Postmaster General), *Cambridge University*
Post Office
American, South, and West Indian Mails, 227
Australian Mails—Miscarriage of Letters, 429
Boy Messenger and District Messenger Companies and Post Office Messenger Service, 1230, 1231, 1427, 1428, 1429, 1656, 1668 ; Res. 1753
Circulars, Type Written, 1662
Colonial Charges, 1647
Ireland
Dublin, 228, 254
Hacketstown and Kiltegan Mail Car, 1671
Kiltimagh Telegraph Station, 1672
Mails—West Donegal, 251
Waterford Town Postman, 1765
Miscellaneous
Newspapers—Foreign Postage, 1667
Parcels with Money in, 1659
Parliamentary Papers, Postage of, 229
Re-Addressed Letters, 584
Sunday Collection of Letters in London, 1665
Transmission of Single Letters by Rail, 762
Officials
Post Office—Punishments—Case of C. A. Lowe, 917
Sick Leave, 470
Sunbury Common Post Office—Officials and Politics, 1058
Superior Officers, 759

[*cont.*

Raikes, Right Hon. H. C.—*cont.*
Post Offices
Liverpool General Office, 763
Morpeth — Non-Delivery of Letters, 1055
Nottingham—Letter Carriers, 1664
Savings Banks
Clerks, 478, 757, 1758
Deferred Annuities, 223
Expenditure in, 1657
Scotland
Lairg Postmastership, 919
Telegraphs
Central Office—Sunday Duty, 479
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Branch, 756
Press Telegrams, 226
Receipts for Telegrams, 1431
Telegraphing Figures, 1235
Telegraphists, Second-Class, 1063

Railways (see *Board of Trade*)

Railway (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bills
c. Ordered to be referred to a Joint Com. of Lords and Commons *Mar* 6, 423
l. Message received *Mar* 9, 457
Message con. and agreed to, and communicated to the Commons *Mar* 10, 577, 605
c. Select Com. of Lords and Commons ordered, Petitions, &c. ordered, and Message sent to Lords *Mar* 16, 1042 ; Report *Mar* 20, 1582

Railway (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bills
Q. Sir R. Paget ; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 5, 265

Randell, Mr. D., *Glamorgan, Gower*
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1787

Rankin, Mr. J., *Herefordshire, Leominster*
Education—Elementary Day Schools, 223
Post Office—Savings Banks—Deferred Annuities, 222

Rasch, Major F. C., *Essex, S.E.*
Army—Long Range at Shoeburyness, 1667
Army Estimates — Pay, Allowances, &c. 337
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 416, 417
Navy
Dockyard Employment, 1418
Torpedo Buoys at Shoeburyness, 589
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Aments. con. 1484, 1561

Reformatory and Industrial School Children Bill
c. Ordered Read 1° * *Mar* 23, 1756

Registration of Certain Writs (Scotland) Bill
- *l.* Presented; Read 1ª * *Mar* 12, 740
  - Read 2ª, and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 16, 1037
  - Com.*; Report; Standing Com. negatived *Mar* 17, 1192
  - Read 3ª * and passed *Mar* 19, 1377

Registration of Electors Acts Amendment Bill
- *l.* Read 1ª * *Mar* 5, 201
  - Read 2ª, and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 13, 898
  - Com.*; Amendts. made; Re-com. to Standing Com. *Mar* 17, 1192

Registration of Electors (Acceleration) Bill
- *c.* 2R.; Bill withdrawn *Mar* 18, 1348

REID, Mr. R. T., *Dumfries, &c.*
- Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 688

Relief of Distress (Ireland), 1891
- Return ordered and presented *Mar* 6, 439

Religious Disabilities (see *Law and Justice and Police*)

RENDEL, Mr. Stuart, *Montgomeryshire*
- Labour Commission, 1539
- Parliament—Morning Sittings, Res. 1084
- Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1452, 1476, 1477, 1553, 1554

RENTOUL, Dr. J. A., *Down, E.*
- Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 147

Returning Officers (Scotland) Bill
- *c.* Ordered; Read 1º * *Mar* 16, 1089
  - Read 2º *April* 6, 1891

Rifle Ranges (see ARMY)

RIPON, Marquess of
- Scotch Railway Strike, 361
- Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1359, 1364, 1370

RITCHIE, Right Hon. C. T. (President of the Local Government Board), *Tower Hamlets, St. George's*
- Allotments
  - Ryeworth Labourers' Application, 595
  - Sanitary Authority Expenses, 1222
- Census, 1064
  - Index to Population Tables, 424
- County Council Elections, 1221
- County Electors Act, 914
- Electors Registration (Acceleration) Bill, Re-com. 340, 341, 342

[*cont.*

RITCHIE, Right Hon. C. T.—*cont.*
- Emigration — Pauper Emigration to the Colonies, 1053
- Local Government Board
  - Food and Drugs Act, Prosecutions under—"Police *v.* Connor," 757
  - Hyde Public Cemetery, 245
  - Local Government Act and Main Roads and County Bridges, 1056, 1223
  - Local Taxation, Res. 979
  - London Water Supply, 1051
  - Parish Assessments, 1420
  - Still-Born Children—Returns, 749
- London Water Commission Bill, Nomination of Com. 1289; Instruction to Com. 1528, 1529
- Mail Ships Bill, Com. 1811
- Metropolis Water Supply Bill, 2R. 199
- Metropolitan Water Bills, 265
- Metropolitan Water Companies' Charges Bill, 2R. 194
- Museums and Gymnasiums Bill, Con. 343
- Parliamentary Electors—Registration, 26
- Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 63, 120, 121, 123, 124, 126, 128, 129
- Poor Law—Distress for Union Relief, 1431
- Public Health (London) Bills, 1539
- Supply
  - Local Government Act and Main Roads, 1173, 1174
  - London and Sheerness Police Courts—Salaries, &c. 529
- Town Holdings—Select Com., Re-appointment of, 719
- Vaccination
  - Death from, 754
  - Royal Commission—Mr. Bradlaugh's Seat, 435

ROBERTS, Mr. J. B., *Carnarvonshire, Eifion*
- Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1459, 1504, 1552

ROBERTSON, Mr. E., *Dundee*
- Labour Commission, 1814
- Parliament—Business of the House, 1680
- Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill—Select Com. 1683, 1686
- Supply—Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1824, 1825

ROBERTSON, Right Hon. J. P. B. (Lord Advocate), *Bute*
- Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Bill, 918; 2R. 1891
- Scotland
  - Crofters
    - Crofter Act (1886), Res. 1589, 1594, 1595
    - Eviction of a Crofter, 584
  - Education
    - Education Department—Reports, 236
    - Fee-Charging Schools in Glasgow, 916
    - School Board Elections, 755, 1065
    - School Children Attendances, Returns, 33

[*cont.*

Robertson, Right Hon. J. P. B.—*cont.*
  Fisheries
    Fish Curing on the Island of Barra, 1535
    Fishery Board, 432
  Law and Justice and Police
    Edinburgh Sheriff Court — Excluding the Public, 915
    Fiars Court, 426
    Greenock Police Force, 1229
    Prisoners Awaiting Trial, 29
    Sheriff Substitute of Sutherland, 1532
  Licensing—Glasgow East End Exhibition, 1426
  Poor Law—Pauper Children, Boarding out, 753
 Supply—Scotch Education, 1243

Robinson, Mr. T., *Gloucester*
 Vaccination Commission—Mr. Bradlaugh's Vacant Seat, 600

Roby, Mr. H. J., *Lancashire, S.E., Eccles*
 Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885 (Gilson Schools), Res. 1516
 Supply—Surveys, United Kingdom, 1889
 Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1485, 1567

Rollit, Sir A. K., *Islington, S.*
 Inflammable Liquids Bill, 923
 Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1573, 1576

Roscoe, Sir H. E., *Manchester, S.*
 Art Gallery at South Kensington, 1424

Rowlands, Mr. J., *Finsbury, E.*
 Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1800
 Inflammable Liquids Bill, 473
 Local Taxation, Res. 979
 National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1631
 Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 109, 110
 Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1579
 Supply
  Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1867
  Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, 1876
  Public Buildings, 1888
  Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1840, 1851

Rowlands, Mr. W. B., *Cardiganshire*
 Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1290, 1303, 1332

Rowntree, Mr. J., *Scarborough*
 Licensing
  Excessive Drinking at Public Houses, 482
  Shebeens in Whitechapel, 1057
 Local Government Act and Main Roads, 1055
 Supply—Local Government Board and Main Roads, 1172, 1174

Russell, Mr. T. W., *Tyrone, S.*
 Ireland
  Education — Technical Instruction, 250, 605
  Poor Law—Ballyshannon Union, 251
 Licensing—" Sharp *v.* Wakefield," 1660
 Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1312, 1314, 1316
 Parliament—Business of the House, 770
 Supply—Ireland—Relief of Distress, 813, 815

Rutland, Duke of
 St. Margaret's, Leicester, Select Vestry Bill, 2R. 874
 Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act, 1890, Amendment Bill, 2R. 899

St. Albans, Duke of
 Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill, 2R. 2, 9, 10, 14, 19
 St. Leonard's Parish, Shoreditch (Sanitary Condition), Address for Return *Mar* 12, 860

St. Margaret's, Leicester, Select Vestry Bill
l. Read 2ª *Mar* 13, 861

Sale of Goods Bill
l. Read 2ª, and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 17, 1181

Salisbury, Marquess of (Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs)
 Africa—Seizure of a British Ship by the Portuguese, 1042
 Borrowing (Infants) Bill, 2R. 1354
 Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill, Report of Amendts. 1357
 Duration of Speeches Bill, 1040, 1041
 Newfoundland Fishery Dispute—Legislation, 1641
 Newfoundland Fisheries Bill, 1R. 1411
 Royal Academy—Sending in Days, 1518
 Technical Instruction Bill, Com. 1364, 1366, 1370, 1371, 1372; 3R. 1522, 1523
 Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Amendts. Reported, 735, 737, 738, 739; 3R. 1185, 1186, 1187, 1188, 1189, 1191; Commons Amendts. con. 1644, 1646
 Turkey and the Eastern Question, Res. 464, 466

Sandhurst, Lord
 Royal Academy—Sending in Days, 1517

Savings Banks
 Banking Reserves, Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 16, 1059
 Post Office Savings Bank (see title Post Office)

Savings Banks Bill
c. Read 2°, and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 17, 1248
 Com. *Mar* 19, 1508; *Mar* 20, 1568

Savings Banks Bill
Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 16, 1059; Q. Mr. Bartley; A. The First Lord of Treas. *April* 6, 1816

SCHWANN, Mr. C. E., *Manchester, N.*
Ceylon
Harbour Accommodation, 1759
Paddy Tax, 1427
Trincomalee Forts and Garrison, Maintenance of, 600
India
North-West Provinces—Treatment of Tenants, 1649
Opium Dens in Burma, 1648
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1219
Supply—Armenian and Ceylon Affairs, 1113, 1154
Turkey—Kurdish and Circassian Troops, Employment of, by the Porte, 762

SCOTLAND, Secretary for (*see* LOTHIAN, Marquess of)

SOLICITOR GENERAL (*see* PEARSON, Sir C. J.)

LORD ADVOCATE (*see* ROBERTSON, Right Hon. J. P. B.)

SCOTLAND
Coal Mines Regulation Act—Airdrie District, Q. Mr. Crawford; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 23, 1663
Crofters
Crofter Act, 1886, Amendt. to Motion for going into Com. of Supply *Mar* 20, 1583
Crofters' Holdings (Scotland) Act (Valuers and Assessors), Return ordered *Mar* 5, 221
Eviction of a Crofter, Q. Dr. McDonald; A. The Lord Adv. *Mar* 10, 584
Education
Education Code, 1891, Motion (Mr. Finlay) *Mar* 16, 1176
Education Department, Reports of, Q. Mr. Caldwell; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 5, 236
Glasgow—Fee-Charging Schools, Q. Dr. Cameron; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 13, 916
School Board Elections, Q. Mr. Sinclair; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 12, 755; Q. Mr. S. Will; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 16, 1064
School Children Attendances, Returns, Q. Mr. Caldwell; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 3, 33
(Refer also to Debate on *Supply*, *Mar* 17, 1238)
Financial Relations of the Three Kingdoms—Imperial Taxation—Salaries of Secretaries of State, Debate on Motion for Adjournment of the House for Easter *Mar* 24, 1801

SCOTLAND—*cont.*
Fisheries
Fish Curing on the Island of Barra, Q. Mr. Keay; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 20, 1535
Fishery Board, Q. Mr. Marjoribanks; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 6, 432
Eyemouth Harbour, Q. Mr. Marjoribanks; A. The Sec. to Treas *Mar* 19, 1429
Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom, Return ordered and presented *Mar* 4, 137
Highlands and Islands Commission
Mail Service to Shetland, Q. Mr. Bryce; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 20, 1532
Recommendations of the Commission, Res. (Mr. Caldwell) *Mar* 23, 1734
Law and Justice and Police
Edinburgh Sheriff Court—Exclusion of the Public, Q. Mr. Buchanan; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 13, 914
Fiars Court, Q. Mr. Caldwell; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 6, 426
Greenock Police Force, Qs. Dr. Cameron, Mr. Marjoribanks; As. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 17, 1229
Prisoners Awaiting Trial, Q. Sir R. Fowler; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 3, 28
Sheriff Substitute of Sutherland, Q. Mr. A. Sutherland; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 20, 1531
Licensing—Glasgow East End Exhibition, Q. Mr. J. Wilson (Lanark, Govan); A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 19, 1426
Lighthouses—Rattray Head, Q. Mr. Buchanan; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 23, 1658
Local Government, Res. 440
Miscellaneous
Eyemouth Harbour (see sub-heading *Fishery Board*)
Glasgow—Explosions in Ironworks, Qs. Dr. Cameron; As. The Under Home Sec. *Mar* 13, 922; Qs. Dr. Cameron, Mr. D. Crawford; As. The Under Home Sec. *Mar* 20, 1534; Q. Dr. Cameron; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 24, 1758
Hydrophobia and Sheep Worrying, Q., Obs. Lord Stanley of Alderley, Viscount Cranbrook *Mar* 12, 741
Ordnance Survey, Qs. Mr. M. Stewart, Sir G. Campbell; As. The Pres. Bd. Ag. *Mar* 17, 1224
Projected Forth and Clyde Ship Canal, Q. Mr. Johnston; A. The Pres. Bd. Trade *Mar* 6, 432
Poor Law—Pauper Children, Boarding out, Q. Mr. Leng; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 12, 753
Post Office
Lairg Postmastership, Q. Mr. A. Sutherland; A. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 13, 918
Mail Service to Shetland, Q. Mr. Bryce; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 20, 1532
Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Act, Q. Mr. Buchanan; A. The Ld. Adv. *Mar* 13, 918
(See also title *Presumption of Life Limitation (Scotland) Bill*)
Railway Strike, Debate [*Lords*] *Mar* 6, 345

[*cont.*

Sea Fisheries of the United Kingdom
Return ordered and presented *Mar* 4, 137

SEALE-HAYNE, Mr. C., *Devon, Ashburton*
Justices of the Peace, Qualification of, 602

Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill
c. Ordered ; Read 1° * *Mar* 4, 200
Read 2° * *Mar* 5, 339
Com. ; Report ; Read 3° * and passed *Mar* 9, 572
l. Read 1ª * *Mar* 10, 579
Read 2ª, and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 13, 899
Com.* ; Report ; Standing Com. negatived *Mar* 16, 1037
Read 3ª *, and passed *Mar* 17, 1192
Royal Assent *Mar* 24, 1812

SELBORNE, Earl of
Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill, Com. 725, 726, 727, 728
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, 3R. 1186, 1188, 1189 ; Commons Amendts. 1642, 1646

SELWIN-IBBETSON, Right Hon. Sir H. J., *Essex, Epping*
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 659

SEXTON, Mr. T., *Belfast, W.*
Ireland
Distress—Relief Works, 253
Irish Lard, 259
Labour Commission, 35
Mails—Larne and Stranraer Route, 259
Prisons—Belfast—Proposed Alterations, 257
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 136

Sheriff Clerks Depute (Scotland) Bill
c. Ordered ; Read 1° * *Mar* 3, 40

SIDMOUTH, Viscount
Education Code, 891
Gibraltar—Dock Accommodation, 1193
Navy—Officers—Promotion, 1026

SINCLAIR, Mr. W. P., *Falkirk, &c.*
Scotland—School Board Elections—Valuation Roll, 755
Supply—Scotch Education, 1246

SINGAPORE
Johore Railway (see title JOHORE)
Opium Traffic, Q. Mr. S. Smith ; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 9, 469 ; Q. Mr. S. Smith ; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 16, 1043
(Refer also to title INDIA)

Slander of Women Bill
c. Read 2° * *Mar* 23, 1755
Com.*—R.P. *April* 6, 1892

Small Holdings Bill
c. Read 2° *Mar* 11, 651

SMITH, Mr. A., *Herts, E.*
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1554

SMITH, Mr. J. P., *Lanark, Partick*
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1343
Scotland—Crofter Act (1886), Res. 1586

SMITH, Mr. S., *Flintshire*
Betting and Gambling, Res. 226, 1273
Chlorodyne, Sale of, 1654
Colonies—Pauper Emigration, 1053
Custody of Children Bill, Com. 1511
India
Child Marriages, 248
Opium Traffic, 469, 747, 1043
Madagascar—Alleged Massacre, 752
Parliament—Counts-out, 247

SMITH, Right Hon. W. H. (First Lord of the Treasury), *Strand, Westminster*
American Copyright Act, 437
Anonymous Editorial Articles, 35
Army Officers—"Mitchell *v.* Regina," 1670
Berlin Labour Conference, 1434
Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Licences Returns, 601
Eight Hours Bill, 491
Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1797, 1798, 1801
Elementary Public Schools, Rating of, 486
Government Contracts, 1538
India—Factory Act, Amendment of, 747
Indian Councils Bill, 1531
Labour and Capital, Royal Commission on, 35, 438, 602, 1065, 1236, 1539, 1763, 1814
Law and Justice
Justices of the Peace, Qualification of, 602
Marriage Laws, 1434
Queen's Bench Division—Alleged Inability of one of the Judges, 487
Local Taxation, Res. 934, 936
London School Board Elections Bill, 924
Malta—Maltese Marriage Laws (see sub-heading PRIVY COUNCIL)
Metropolis Water Supply Bill, 2R. 199
Mines (Eight Hours) Bill, 1067, 1675
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), 1538 ; Res. 1635, 1636
Newfoundland Fishery Disputes
Arbitration Board, 1233
French Treaty Rights, 1814
House of Lords Bill, 1537, 1674, 1675
Parliament
Business of the House, 25, 247, 266, 438, 439, 768, 770, 771 ; Res. 928, 929, 930, 931 ; Qs. 1237, 1435, 1582, 1679, 1680, 1681, 1682, 1765
Motion for Com. of Supply, 492, 493
Private Bills Fees, 262
Private Members' Bills and the Standing Orders, 1068

[*cont.*

SMITH, Right Hon. W. H.—*cont.*
  Privilege—Mr. Atkinson and the "Daily News," 268
  Sittings and Adjournments of the House
    Easter Recess, 265
    Morning Sittings, Res. 1074, 1086
  Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Bill, 925; Select Com. 1685, 1686, 1687, 1690
  Privy Council—Judicial Committee
    Bishop of Lincoln's Case, 602
    Maltese Marriage Laws and Religious Disabilities in England, 36, 262, 1435
  Purchase of Land and Congested Districts (Ireland) Bill, 1814
  Savings Banks Bill, 1816
  Scotland
    Education Code, 1179
    Highlands and Islands Commission, Res. 1742
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, 1290
  Town Holdings Committee, 437

SOLICITOR GENERAL (*see* CLARKE, Sir E.)

SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (*see* PEARSON, Sir C. J.)

Solicitors and Apprentices (Ireland) Bill
c. Read 2° * *Mar* 18, 1348

SOMERVELL, Mr. J., *Ayr, &c.*
  Local Government, Res. 456

South Kensington and Paddington Subway Bill
c. Instruction to Com. *Mar* 6, 386
  Motion for Select Com. con. and agreed to, Papers, &c. ordered *Mar* 10, 579

South Kensington and Paddington Subway Bill
  Q. Colonel Hambro; A. The First Com. of Works *Mar* 17, 1220

SOUTH PACIFIC
  Admiralty Establishments (see AUSTRALIA—*Sydney*)

Southwark and Vauxhall Water Bill
c. Read 2°, and com. to Select Com. on the London Water Commission Bill *Mar* 12, 744

SPEAKER, The (Right Hon. ARTHUR WELLESLEY PEEL), *Warwick and Leamington*

COMMITTEES
  The proper form of an Instruction to Com. is to instruct the Com. to carry out certain views—and that part of an Instruction which explains the reason for submitting it is unusual *Mar* 6, 382

SPEAKER, The—*cont.*
MISCELLANEOUS
  Mar 4, 200; *Mar* 6, 415, 416; *Mar* 19, 1440; *Mar* 23, 1675, 1695, 1706; *Mar* 24, 1766, 1780, 1795, 1796

RULES AND ORDER OF DEBATE
  When a mere objection to a Motion does not hold—no Member moving the Closure—and the objector continues the Debate, the Debate must stand adjourned *Mar* 3, 136
  It is unusual and inconvenient for a Member by a Motion to ask the opinion of the House upon a subject which is already before a Committee *Mar* 13, 933
  A Member is entitled to complain of a question concerning him being put to the House without proper notice; but he cannot go into details concerning the matter upon which the question was asked *Mar* 16, 1074
  The proper time to move an Amendt. is before the Speaker puts the Question, "That the House do agree with the Lords in the said Amendt." *Mar* 19, 1450
  A Member can oppose the Lords Amendts. altogether by opposing the Motion that the Lords Amendts., as amended, be agreed to *Mar* 19, 1457
  If a Motion is made by a Minister in charge of a Bill to adjourn the consideration of a certain clause until after the other Amendts. are disposed of, and the Motion meets with the approval of the House, the Speaker will not object to it *Mar* 19, 1470
  It is irregular to refer at length to Debates in the Lords; but it may be necessary to refer to a statement upon which an Amendt. has been founded *Mar* 19, 1500
  A Member cannot move "That the House do disagree with a clause as amended"—he must vote against the clause *Mar* 20, 1542
  To move an Amendt. to an Amendt., the object of which would be gained by negativing the proposal "That the House do agree with the Lords Amendts.," is unnecessary. If the Lords Amendts. are rejected, the Member can then move an alternative proposition *Mar* 24, 1768

SUPPLY
  For a Member of the Government to move the Adjournment of the House at One o'clock would be contrary to the Standing Orders, which provide that after any business exempted from the operation of the Res. is disposed of, the remainder of the business will be dealt with in accordance with Rules relating to Business after Twelve o'clock *Mar* 13, 929

SPENCER, Earl
  Justices of the Peace Qualification Amendment Bill, 2R. 20, 22

[cont.

STANHOPE, Right Hon. E. (Secretary of State for War), *Lincolnshire, Horncastle*
Army
Bermuda
Grenadier Guards, 234
Leicestershire Regiment, 1236
Contracts
Provisions, 585
Sub-letting Contracts, 244
Egypt—Tokar Expedition, 476
India—Magazine Rifles, 249
Ireland—Drugs Contract, 1438
Miscellaneous
Army Agents, Commission to, 1418
Army and Navy Service—Expenditure—Returns, 761
Intoxicating Liquor in Recreation Rooms, 1764
Prize Money and the Crimean Veterans, 753
Sentry Duty in London, 266, 1052
Torpedo Buoys at Shoeburyness, 589
Officers
Army Service Office Corps—Colonelcies, 1531
Baccarat Scandal, 232
Regimental and Battalion Commandants, 1758
Ordnance and Manufacturing Department
Brennan Torpedoes, 1426, 1666
Magazine Rifles, 600, 1053, 1430
Steel Forgings, 752
Stocktaking, 759
Woolwich Arsenal
Accidents—Mr. Davey's Claim, 1813
Labourers' Wages, 244
Rifle Ranges
Long Range at Shoeburyness, 1667
Staines Ranges, 1050
Volunteers
Battalions Proceeding to and from Regimental Camps, 762
Grants to Efficient Volunteers, 235, 1062
Rifle Ranges (see that sub-heading)
Volunteer Infantry, Increases in the Establishment of, 470
Wales—Merionethshire Volunteers, 1430
Army (Annual) Bill, Com. 1260, 1261
Army Estimates
Pay and Allowances, 298, 311, 313, 320, 329, 334, 335, 337, 338 ; Report, 575
Army Schools Bill, Com. 1890

STANHOPE, Hon. P. J., *Wednesbury*
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 386, 396, 399, 421
Supply
Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, 1878, 1886
Public Buildings, 1889

STANLEY OF ALDERLEY, Lord
Hydrophobia and Sheep Worrying, 741
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Amendts. Reported, 732

STANSFELD, Right Hon. J., *Halifax*
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 40, 80, 123, 129

Statute Law Revision Bill
l. Presented ; Read 1^{a} * *Mar* 19, 1414

Statutory Rules Procedure Bill
c. Ordered ; Read 1^{o} * *Mar* 23, 1755

STEPHENS, Mr. H. C., *Middlesex, Hornsey*
Inflammable Liquids Bill, 599

STEVENSON, Mr. F. S., *Suffolk, Eye*
Bankrupt Trustees, 1432
Glebes, Sale of, Res. 1698
Parliament—Business of the House, 266
Perak—Ex-Sultan Abdullah, 924
Small Holdings Bill, 2R. 683, 684
Supply—Armenian Affairs, 1099
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1489, 1541, 1767, 1773, 1791, 1792

STEWART, Mr. H., *Lincolnshire, Spalding*
Glebes, Sale of, Res. 1705, 1706

STEWART, Mr. M. J., *Kirkcudbright*
Betting and Gambling, 1431 ; Res. 1279
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 420
Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Wales) Bill, 2R. 1323
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1639
Scotland—Ordnance Survey, 1224

Stipendiary Magistrates Bill
c. Ordered ; read 1^{o} * *Mar* 4, 200

STOREY, Mr. S., *Sunderland*
Army Estimates—Egypt—Military Affairs, 313, 320, 331
Electors Registration (Acceleration) Bill, Recom. 341
Museums and Gymnasiums Bill, Con. 343, 344
Silksworth Evictions
Conduct of Police, 237, 239 ; Res. 269, 273, 275, 282, 283, 284, 288, 296
Mr. Dix's Application to the Magistrates, 1650
Mr. Storey, 925 ; Personal Explanation, 1072

STRATHEDEN AND CAMPBELL, Lord
Turkey and the Eastern Question, Res. 457, 466

STUART, Mr. J., *Shoreditch, Hoxton*
County Council Elections, 1221
Local Taxation, Res. 933, 937, 955, 957, 969, 997, 1001
Metropolitan Water Companies' Charges Bill, 2R. 194

SUDELEY, Lord
Army—Non-Commissioned Officers and the Civil Service, 1386
Navy—Officers—Promotion, 1017

SULLIVAN, Mr. D., *Westmeath, S.*
Ireland — Land Commission — Baltinglass, 1436

SUMMERS, Mr. W., *Huddersfield*
Cemetery at Hyde, 245
Labour Commission, 437, 438
Licensing—On-Licences and Tied Houses, 432, 485, 1418
Maltese Marriage Laws and Religious Disabilities in England, 36, 262, 1435

SUPPLY
Army and Navy Estimates (see those titles)

CIVIL SERVICE (SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1890-91)

CLASS I.
£136,200—Light Railways (Ireland) Act, Expenditure under, Com. *Mar* 12, 831; Report *Mar* 13, 1014

CLASS II.
£500—Colonial Office, Com. *Mar* 9, 519; Report* *Mar* 12, 858
£456—Friendly Societies' Registry, Com. *Mar* 9, 524; Report* *Mar* 12, 858
£20,000 — Mint, Including Coinage, Com* *Mar* 9, 525; Report* *Mar* 12, 858
£1,150—Works and Public Buildings, Com.* *Mar* 9, 525; Report* *Mar* 12, 858

CLASS II.
£10 — Bankruptcy Department, Board of Trade, Com. *Mar* 9, 524; Report* *Mar* 12, 858
£200—Salaries and Expenses of the Police Courts of London and Sheerness, Com. *Mar* 9, 525; Report* *Mar* 12, 858

CLASS III.
£150,000 — Constabulary Force (Ireland), Com. *Mar* 16, 1089; Report* *Mar* 17, 1288

CLASS IV.
£190—London University, Com.* *Mar* 9, 530; Report* *Mar* 12, 858
£11,484—West and South Africa, Com. *Mar* 9, 532; Report* *Mar* 12, 858

CLASS V.
£15,005—Treasury Chest, Com. *Mar* 9, 569; Report* *Mar* 12, 858

CLASS VI.
£3,915—Superannuation and Retired Allowances, Com. *Mar* 9, 571; *Mar* 16, 1093; Report* *Mar* 17, 1238

CLASS VII.
£55,831—Relief of Distress, Ireland, Com. *Mar* 12, 778; Report* *Mar* 13, 1013

CIVIL SERVICE AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS VOTE ON ACCOUNT
£3,917,003—Com. *Mar* 16, 1096; Report *Mar* 17, 1238

[*cont.*

SUPPLY—*cont.*

CIVIL SERVICE AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS EXCESSES
£5,885 10s. 11d.—Com. *Mar* 16, 1096; Report* *Mar* 17, 1238

CIVIL SERVICE AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS POST OFFICE
£90,000—Com. *Mar* 16, 1096; Report* *Mar* 17, 1238

CIVIL SERVICE ESTIMATES, 1891-92
CLASS I.—PUBLIC WORKS AND BUILDINGS
£30,710—Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, Com. *April* 6, 1816
£78,904—Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, Com. *April* 6, 1838
£29,625—Houses of Parliament Buildings, Com. *April* 6, 1855
£46,000—Admiralty, Extension of Buildings, Com. *April* 6, 1872
£53,346 — Miscellaneous Legal Buildings, Com. *April* 6, 1873
£28,461—Art and Science Buildings, Great Britain, Com. *April* 6, 1877
£41,758—Diplomatic and Consular Buildings, Com. *April* 6, 1878
£147,450—Public Buildings, Great Britain, Com. *April* 6, 1887
£281,350—Revenue Department Buildings, Great Britain, Com.* *April* 6, 1887
£175,770—Survey, United Kingdom, Com. *April* 6, 1889

SUTHERLAND, Mr. A., *Sutherland*
Scotland
  Crofter Act (1886), Res. 1594
  Highlands and Islands Commission, Res. 1740
  Lairg Postmastership, 918, 919
  Sheriff Substitute of Sutherland, 1531
Supply—Scotch Education, 1245

SUTHERLAND, Sir T., *Greenock*
Chili, British Vessels at, 1534
Merchant Vessels—Watertight Bulkheads, Com. 1669

SWINBURNE, Sir J., *Staffordshire, Lichfield*
Armenia—Affairs at Zeitoun, 231
Army Estimates—Egyptian Military Affairs, &c. 333, 337
Glebes, Sale of, Res. 1694, 1695
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 413, 419
Metropolis (Shelton Street, St. Giles) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 904
Midland Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 422
Parliament—Business of the House, 1682
Post Office—Sunday Collection of Letters in London, 1665
Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill, 3R. 574

[*cont.*

Swinburne, Sir J.—*cont.*
  Supply
    Ireland
      Light Railways, 847
      Relief of Distress, 829, 830
    Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1821
    Treasury Chest, 571
    West and South Africa, 566
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1488, 1504, 1567, 1781, 1796

Talbot, Mr. J. G., *Oxford University*
  Education—Training Colleges, Students in, 1221
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1489, 1500

Tanner, Dr. C. K., *Cork Co., Mid*
  Army Estimates
    Egyptian Military Affairs, 318
    Pay and Allowances, 333, 339
  Dog-Muzzling in Bournemouth, 763
  Electors Registration (Acceleration) Bill, Re-com. 340
  Ireland
    Achill Sound Bridge, 604
    Cattle Trade, 603
    Distress
      Relief Works, 425, 427, 430, 431, 434, 490, 491, 775, 776, 924
      Seed Potatoes Supply, 430
    Labourers' Dwellings in Cork, 776
    Piers
      Castletownsend, 771, 772
      Lord Courtown's Pier, 913
    Post Office, Dublin, 428
    Prisons—Prisoners' Exercise, 777, 1068
    Railways—Westport and Mulranny Light Railway, 924
  Parliament
    Business of the House, 770, 771
    Motion for Com. of Supply, 493
  Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 135
  Seed Potatoes Supply (Ireland) Act (1890) Amendment Bill, Com. 572, 573; 3R. 574
  Supply
    Ireland
      Light Railways, 853; Report, 1016
      Relief of Distress, 816, 818, 821, 826, 827, 830, 831
    London University, 531
    Treasury Chest, 569
    West and South Africa, 568

Teachers' (Registration and Organisation) Bill
c. Select Com. nominated, and Papers, &c. ordered *Mar* 5, 344
  Select Com., Members discharged and Members added to, *Mar* 12, 860

Teachers' Registration Bill
c. Read 2^o, and com. to Select Com. on Teachers' (Registration and Organisation) Bill *Mar* 9, 576

Technical Instruction Bill
c. Com.; Report *Mar* 9, 575
  As amended Con.; Read 3^o* and passed *Mar* 12, 858
l. Read 1^a* *Mar* 13, 875
  Read 2^a, and com. to Com. of the Whole House *Mar* 16, 1036
  Com; Report; Standing Com. negatived *Mar* 19, 1377
  Read 3^a with Amendts, and passed *Mar* 20, 1522
c. Lords Amendts. con. and agreed to *Mar* 20, 1582
l. Returned from the Commons *Mar* 20, 1527
  Royal Assent *Mar* 24, 1812

Telegraphs (see Post Office)

Textile Trades (Hours and Wages of Half-Timers)
  Return ordered *Mar* 13, 927
    Extension of Information ordered *Mar* 20, 1540

Theobald, Mr. J., *Essex, Romford*
  Metropolis (Shelton Street, St. Giles) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 911
  Supply—Civil Service Clerks, 1171

Thomas, Mr. D. A., *Merthyr Tydvil*
  Labour Commission, 602
  Railway Companies' Loan and Debenture Capital, 480
  Town Holdings, Select Com., Re-appointment of, 718
  Wales
    Coal Mines Regulation Act, 591
    Education—Training Colleges, 480

Thring, Lord
  Technical Instruction Bill, 2R. 1036; Com. 1359, 1361, 1367, 1368, 1369, 1371, 1372, 1373, 1374, 1375, 1377
  Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Amendts. Reported, 739

Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill
l. Reported from Standing Com. *Mar* 10, 577
  Amendts. Reported *Mar* 12, 732
  Read 3^a (and Amendts. made) and passed *Mar* 17, 1184
c. Lords Amendts. con. *Mar* 19, 1440—R.P.
  Debate resumed; Several Amendts. agreed to and several disagreed to, and Consequential Amendts. made; Com. appointed to draw up reasons for disagreeing, and Report agreed to *Mar* 20, 1540, 1581
l. Returned from the Commons; Several Amendts. to which the Commons disagreed not insisted on, and Commons Consequential Amendts. to Lords Amendts. con. and Consequential Amendts. made, and Bill returned to the Commons *Mar* 23, 1642, 1683
c. Lords Amendts., in lieu of the Amendt. disagreed to by the Commons, con.; Division *Mar* 24, 1766
l. Returned to the Lords *Mar* 24, 1757
  Royal Assent *Mar* 24, 1812

Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill
Lords Amendments, Q. Mr. G. O. Morgan; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 18, 1290

Tomlinson, Mr. W. E. M., *Preston*
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 175, 177
Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1800
Technical Instruction Bill, Con. 859
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1500, 1502

Tonquin
Murder of Mr. and Mrs. Keeble, Q. Mr. Beaufoy; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 19, 1421

Town Holdings Select Committee
Motion for the Re-appointment of Com. and Com. nominated; Papers, &c. ordered *Mar* 11, 718
Local Taxation, Res. (Mr. J. Stuart) *Mar* 13, 933
Q. Mr. Channing; A. The First Lord of Treas. *Mar* 6, 437

Trade and Commerce (see title *Labour, Trade, and Commerce*)

Tramways (Ireland) Act (1860) Amendment Bill
c. Read 2^o * *Mar* 23, 1755

Treasury—First Lord (*see* Smith, Right Hon. W. H.)

Treasury—Financial Secretary to (*see* Jackson, Rt. Hon. W. L.)

Treasury—Patronage Secretary to (*see* Akers-Douglas, Mr. A.)

Treaties of Commerce (see *Labour, Trade, and Commerce*)

Trevelyan, Right Hon. Sir G. O., *Glasgow, Bridgeton*
Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1798, 1801
Parliament—Business of the House, 1236, 1237
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 60, 114, 121, 126, 128
Scotland—Crofter Act (1886), Res. 1595, 1596
Supply
  Ireland—Constabulary Force, 1091
  Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1823
  Scotch Education, 1244
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1549, 1790

Trincomalee (*see* Ceylon)

Trustee Bill
l. Presented; Read 1^a * *Mar* 17, 1192

Tuite, Mr. J., *Westmeath, N.*
Ireland—Land Commission, Westmeath, 1436

Turkey
Armenia (see that title)
Constantinople—Shipping Labour, Q. Mr. Atkinson; A. The Under Sec. for Fn Affrs. *Mar* 9, 483
Crete, Condition of, Q. Mr. Leveson-Gower; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 230
Cyprus and the Turkish Tribute (see titl Cyprus)
Eastern Question, Motion for Papers (Lord Stratheden and Campbell) *Mar* 9, 457
Kurdish and Circassian Troops, Employment of, by the Porte, Q. Mr. Schwann; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 12, 762
Moussa Bey, Q. Mr. Leveson-Gower; A. The Under Sec. for Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 230
Nablus—English Episcopal Church, Q. Sir J. Kennaway; A. The Under Sec. fo Fn. Affrs. *Mar* 5, 222

Tweeddale, Marquess of
Scotch Railway Strike, 363

United States (*see* America)

Vaccination (see *Local Governmen Board*)

Vincent, Mr. C. E. H., *Sheffield, Central*
American Copyright Act, 436
Commercial Treaties with the Colonies, 1288, 1660; Res. 1744, 1749
Custody of Children Bill, Com. 1510, 1511
Friendly Societies, Res. 606, 610, 626, 627, 647; Select Committee's Recommendations, 1420, 1422
National Provident Insurance—Select Committee's Recommendations, 1422

Vivian, Sir H. Hussey, *Swansea, Distric*
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 417

Waddy, Mr. S. D., *Lincolnshire, Brigg*
Supply
  Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1858
  Royal Palaces and Marlborough House, 1822, 1827, 1829

Wales
Army—Volunteers in Merionethshire, Q. Mr. W. P. Morgan; A. The Sec. for Wa *Mar* 19, 1430
Cardiff—Shipment of Incompetent Seamen Qs. Mr. J. Chamberlain; As. The Pres Bd. Trade *Mar* 5, 224; *Mar* 16, 1049
County Court Sittings, Return ordered *Ma* 23, 1756

[*cont.*

WALES—*cont.*
Education—Training Colleges for Teachers, Q. Mr. Powell; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 17, 1221; Q. Sir R. Paget; A. The Vice Pres. *Mar* 23, 1654
Hydrophobia and Sheep Worrying, Q., Obs. Lord Stanley of Alderley, Viscount Cranbrook *Mar* 12, 741
Labour Commission (see title *Labour, Trade, and Commerce*)
Local Government, Res. 440
Mines
Collieries—Winding Coal through the Upcast Shaft, Q. Mr. D. Thomas; A. The Home Sec. *Mar* 10, 591
Metalliferous Mines, Q. Mr. W. P. Morgan; A. The Att. Gen. *Mar* 19, 1433
Quarter Sessions (Boroughs), Address for Return *Mar* 11, 649

WAR DEPARTMENT (*see* ARMY)

WAR DEPARTMENT—Secretary of State (*see* STANHOPE, Right Hon. E.)

WAR DEPARTMENT—Under Secretary of State (*see* BROWNLOW, Earl)

WAR DEPARTMENT—Financial Secretary (*see* BRODRICK, Hon. W. St. J.)

WARING, Colonel T., *Down, N.*
Ireland
Educational Endowments (Ireland) Act, 1885 (Gilson Schools), Res. 1515
Police—County Inspector Burke, 1437 (and see list of *Errata*)
Parliament—Business of the House, 771

WARMINGTON, Mr. C. M., *Monmouth, W.*
Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1575
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1490

WATKIN, Sir E. W., *Hythe*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1203, 1216

WATT, Mr. H., *Glasgow, Camlachie*
Commercial Treaties with West Indian Colonies, 1666

WAYS AND MEANS
Consolidated Fund (No. 1) Bill
Res., To Grant out of the Consolidated Fund towards making good Supply for the years ending *Mar* 31, 1890 and 1891, the sum of £596,035; To grant out of the Consolidated Fund towards making good Supply to *Mar* 31, 1892, £9,036,700; Com.* *Mar* 12, 858; Reported* *Mar* 13, 1016
Res., To Grant out of the Consolidated Fund towards making good Supply for the years ending *Mar* 31, 1890 and 1891, £249,800 10s. 11d.; To Grant out of the Consolidated Fund towards making good Supply to *Mar* 31, 1892, £3,917,103; Com. *Mar* 16, 1176; Report *Mar* 17, 1247
Budget, Q. Mr. S. Buxton; A. The Ch. of Exch. *Mar* 5, 244

WEBSTER, Sir R. E. (Attorney General), *Isle of Wight*
Colonies—Gold and Silver Mining, 484
Conveyancing and Law of Property Act (1881) Amendment Bill, 2R. 180, 183, 184, 185
Custody of Children Bill, 2R. 1258; Com. 1347, 1509, 1510
Directors' Liability Act, 472
Electoral Disabilities Removal Bill, Com. 1259, 1755, 1799
Law and Justice
Bankruptcy Trustees, 1432
County Court Sittings, 767
"Frances Bennett *v.* Buxton Lime Company," 34, 247
Metalliferous Mines, 1433
Royal Courts of Justice, 1537, 1538
Licensing—Regulation of Licensed Houses, 1813
Merchandise Marks Act—Irish Lard, 260
Municipal Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Practices) Act (1884), 436
Tithe Rent-Charge Recovery Bill, Lords Amendts. con. 1448, 1453, 1462, 1464, 1468, 1470, 1475, 1476, 1496, 1497, 1544, 1767, 1781, 1784, 1785, 1787

WEBSTER, Mr. R. G., *St. Pancras, E.*
Evictions in Somers Town, 474, 475
London Water (Meter) Bill, 2R. 196
Parliament—Standing Orders, 1647
Parliamentary Elections—Illiterate Voters, 1417
South American and West Indian Mails, 227

WEMYSS, Earl of
Scotch Railway Strike, 345, 357, 360, 376, 377

WEST INDIES
Bermuda
Grenadier Guards, Qs. Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Cobb; As. The Sec. for War *Mar* 5, 234
Leicestershire Regiment, Q. Sir W. Barttelott; A. The Sec. for War *Mar* 17, 1236
British Guiana
Commercial Treaties, Q. Mr. Watt; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 23, 1665 (Refer also to title *Colonies*)
Crown Agents, Q. Sir T. Esmonde; A. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 13, 912
Jamaica Railways—American Syndicate, Qs. Mr. S. Leighton, Captain Price; As. The Under Sec. for Cols. *Mar* 10, 587
Mails, Qs. Mr. Webster; As. The P.M. Gen. *Mar* 5, 227

WHARTON, Mr. J. L., *York, W.R., Ripon*
Silksworth Evictions, Res. 280, 288, 291, 296, 925

WHITLEY, Mr. E., *Liverpool, Everton*
Africa—Congo River—British Trade, 593
Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Bill, 2R. 1199
Savings Banks Bill, Com. 1572, 1575

WHITMORE, Mr. C. A., *Chelsea*
Local Taxation, Res. 958
Parliamentary Franchise, Res. 59, 61, 65

WIGGIN, Mr. H., *Staffordshire, Handsworth*
Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway (Extension to London, &c.) Bill, 2R. 1219
Metropolitan Water Companies' Charges Bill, 2R. 195

WILL, Mr. J. S., *Montrose, &c.*
Scotch School Board Elections, 1064

WILSON, Mr. H. J., *York, W.R., Holmfirth*
Army Estimates—Egypt—Military Affairs, 319
Custody of Children Bill, 2R. 1258
India—Opium Traffic in Burma, 1530
Mines—Explosions in Coal Mines, 1668
Supply
  Houses of Parliament Buildings, 1867
  Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1841, 1842

WILSON, Mr. J., *Durham, Mid.*
Police—Silksworth Evictions, 239; Res. 286

WILSON, Mr. J., *Lanark, Govan*
Board of Trade—Vessels Built for Foreigners, 244
Scotland—Licensing—Glasgow East End Exhibition, 1426

WINTERBOTHAM, Mr. A. B., *Gloucester, Cirencester*
Ecclesiastical Commissioners—Licences Returns, 601
Great Eastern Railway Company (Rates and Charges) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 391, 397
Supply—Royal Parks and Pleasure Gardens, 1844

WOLMER, Viscount, *Hants, Petersfield*
Army—Sentries in London, 265, 1052

WOODALL, Mr. W., *Hanley*
Marriages in British Embassies, &c. Act, 30
Marriage Laws—Legislation, 1433

WORKS—First Commissioner (*see* PLUNKET, Right Hon. D. R.)

WORTLEY, Mr. C. B. STUART (Under Secretary of State for the Home Department), *Sheffield, Hallam*
Custody of Children Bill, Com. 1511
Inflammable Liquids Bill, 923
Metropolis (Shelton Street, St. Giles) Provisional Order Bill, 2R. 909
National Museums and Galleries (Opening on Sunday), Res. 1629, 1630, 1631
Patent Office Publications, 558
Reformatory and Industrial School Ships, Res. 1730, 1732, 1733
Scotland—Explosion in Ironworks, 922, 1535
Supply—London and Sheerness Police Courts—Salaries, 527

WRIGHT, Mr. C., *Lancashire, S.W., Leigh*
Burial Act—Ashton-in-Makerfield, 590

WRIGHT, Mr. H. S., *Nottingham, S.*
Nottingham Postmen, 1664

YORK, Archbishop of
Clergy Discipline (Immorality) Bill, 2R. 211; Com. 728, 729, 730

END OF VOLUME CCCLI., AND THIRD VOLUME OF

SESSION 1890-91.

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